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BULLETIN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE SERIES, VOL. 7, NO. 3, PP. 235-445

THE AMALGAMATED WOOD WORKERS' INTER-
NATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF TRADE UNIONISM IN ITS RELATION
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDUSTRY

BY

FREDERICK SHIPP DEIBLER, PH. D.

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

MADISON, WISCONSIN
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PREFACE

In this study an endeavor has been made to trace the history of a trade union, and to show, in so far as it is possible, the connection between the problems of organized labor and the evolution of the industry itself. The recognition of the close relation between the history of the industry and the problems of the union has led to a study of the evolution of the wood working trades, tracing the influence and effect of machine processes, and the gradual separation of the industry into several trades, in which there were specific and particular problems, which, in turn, have given rise to separate trade unions. In so far as it was possible, the history of these early unions has been followed and the attempt has been made to show how the experience of these organizations was carried over and became an influence in shaping the structure and the attitude of the later trade unions.

This portion of the thesis may be regarded as introductory. The chief work has been done on the study of the formation, structure, and policies of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, but in studying the history and the problems of this union, the influence of industrial conditions has been kept constantly in mind.

The facts for this thesis have been collected from a variety of sources. The history of the industry had to be collected from scattered and brief references, which required a large amount of patient search for facts. The development of wood working tools and the mechanical principles involved has been adequately treated in a number of works and reference is made to them in the appropriate place in the body of this thesis. The most fruitful source of information concerning the history of the early unions is to be found in the documentary material in the Wis-

consin State University Library to which the writer was very kindly given access. The principal source of information for the history of the later organizations is the documentary material to be found largely in the administrative offices of the union. Much of the information concerning the structure of the organization, its methods and policies, as well as the present industrial conditions had to be gained by personal conferences with trade union officials and with employers. The writer desires to express his appreciation of the courtesies almost uniformly extended to him in the collection of the information for this thesis. He is especially indebted to Mr. John G. Meiler and Mr. D. D. Mulcahy, General Secretary and General President respectively, of the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union, who very kindly granted access to the records of the organization and whose assistance was most cordially given in answering many problems concerning the structure and policies of the union. But more particularly the writer desires to express his sincerest thanks to Professor John R. Commons, who first suggested the study and who has continually aided by wise counsel and invaluable suggestion. Finally, the writer desires to acknowledge his obligation to Professor Richard T. Ely whose interest and encouragement very materially assisted in the completion of this study.

F. S. DEIBLER.

Evanston, Illinois,
June 20, 1910.

THE AMALGAMATED WOOD WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

This thesis proceeds upon the idea that an intensive study of the origin and development of an individual union will reveal to the best advantage the principles of unionism, and the workings of organized labor. Unionism is regarded as a social phenomenon which requires for a clear understanding of its social importance, the same sort of treatment that has been given to other social institutions. The economist, in his study of society, should lay bare the institutions of society and show their social significance in much the same way in which the surgeon lays bare the organs of the human body in order to understand their functions. By applying this method of investigation to this subject, there appear two points of view from which to consider the union. In the first place, the union may be regarded as a social institution, having very definite relations to other institutions of society, as for example, the relation of the union to the state, or, in a more restricted sense, the relation of one union to another. Secondly, the structure of the organization may be studied, that is, its legislative, financial, and judicial systems,—also its industrial policy and the relation of this policy to the industry itself. These are questions with which an analytical study of a union will concern itself, and which, it is believed, will throw light upon the larger problems of organized labor.

The larger part of this thesis is devoted to the study of the structural side of the union for the two following reasons: (1) Until within recent years, less attention has been given to this phase of the study of organized labor than its importance deserves; (2) it is believed that judgments formed concerning

the broader social significance of unionism will have a stronger claim for recognition when based upon an intimate knowledge of the internal workings of the union. This is especially true when the policy of a union is criticised and remedies are offered for the correction of evils which are thought to exist in the management of its affairs. Frequently a union may take action on some question of vital interest to the community, which results in serious financial loss both to the union and to the community. The public will invariably blame the union, when, as a matter of fact, the union has followed, because of influences beyond its control, the only course of action that was opened to it. This situation is illustrated by a strike of the cabinet-makers in New York City in 1892. In 1890 the carpenters had inaugurated a movement for an eight hour work-day, and called upon the cabinet-makers to make the same demand. But the cabinet-makers refused to comply with the request on the ground that their trade was much more seriously affected by competition outside of the city than was that of the carpenters. The carpenters, however, were successful in their efforts to introduce a shorter work-day, and owing to the close connection between the cabinet-makers and the building trades, and especially with the carpenters, difficulties arose continually between the two unions. The eight hour question was kept boiling and finally the cabinet-makers gave way to the pressure and engaged in a struggle which resulted in a loss to both sides.¹ This is only one illustration from many that might be cited, and goes to strengthen the position that the attitude of a union toward any question should not be condemned until facts have been produced to explain this attitude. The union should at least be given a fair hearing.

In selecting a union for treatment two considerations have been kept in mind in determining the choice: (1) it was thought desirable to choose an organization concerning which there was sufficient historical data available to make possible an adequate treatment; (2) then, to select a union that would illustrate as

¹ 30th An. Rept. N. Y. Bu. Statistics of Lab. 1892, Pt. II, pp. 189-190. The facts are taken from a report of the secretary of the union.

many phases of unionism as possible. The latter consideration was the primary reason for choosing the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union of America. This organization is an international union, with locals situated in the United States and Canada; it is also an amalgamated union, having been formed from the Machine Wood Workers' International Union and the International Furniture Workers' Union. Furthermore, the wood-working industry is one of the most important industries in the country, and, from the point of view of organization, it presents many interesting phases of the problem.² The extended introduction of power machinery into the industry about the middle of the last century greatly facilitated specialization, and gave rise to large factory production in almost all the specialized lines. As a result of this new condition a more minute division of labor was made possible and profitable. Former trades were modified and new trades were formed, which resulted in conflicting interests and new trade lines had to be drawn. For instance, prior to this period, the manufacture of sash, doors, and blinds was the work of the carpenter. The building material was brought to the site of the building and the carpenter proceeded to manufacture a house. Today sash, doors, and blinds are almost exclusively factory products, and the work of the carpenter to that extent has become that of an assembler of a house. Even more striking than this is the case of the cabinet-makers in furniture factories who formerly were highly skilled workmen, but who have now become almost exclusively assemblers. The union has brought together these men, employed in widely varying branches of the trade. The work of the ordinary "sticker" in the planing mill is not very much like the work of the highly skilled carver or finisher in the furniture factory. The natural result of this situation has been to create conflicting interests and demands among the workmen themselves. The union has had to adjust itself to this condition and devise methods of treating widely different demands, as will be shown later. Growing out of the shifting lines of the in-

² In the 12th Census lumber and its re-manufacture ranked fourth in point of value among all our industries with products valued at \$1,030,906,579.00. *Cf. 12th Census*, Vol. VII, p. cl.

dustry has developed one of the longest and most bitterly contested jurisdictional disputes that has existed in this country. Then, the union has had one serious conflict with capital, which gave rise to a conspiracy case of more than usual importance. In fact, from almost any point of view the experience of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union furnishes important and instructive phases of trade unionism.

PART I. THE INDUSTRY AND EARLY ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER I

THE INDUSTRY

Many of the problems with which the union has had to deal have grown directly out of the nature of the industry itself. This fact will justify a consideration of the industry with the view of setting forth the field claimed by the union, and of understanding some of the problems which the union has had to solve in organizing the trade. If one should follow the manufacture of wood from the tree in the forest to the finished products sold on the market, there would be found two large groups of industries, each of which has a number of fairly distinct branches. These two groups, as they appear in the United States Census, are the lumber industry, including the felling of the trees, logging, and the manufacture of lumber in the saw-mills; and the remanufacture of lumber, the most important subdivisions of which are the manufacture of house-hold furniture, agricultural implements, musical instruments, carriages and wagons, and ship-building.¹

The union does not presume to organize all of the laborers engaged in all of these branches, but it claims for its own jurisdiction, roughly speaking, the laborers engaged in *factory* manufacture of wood products,—in other words, all “indoor wood-workers.” The limitation thus set would include all the laborers employed in factories from those who receive the lumber as it comes from the saw-mill to those who place some finished product upon the market,—from the planing-mill on the one side to the furniture factory, as a type on the other. However, no hard and fast lines can be drawn separating these trades on account of the constant change in the methods of production,

¹ Ship-building is classed in the census as a separate group.

which has transferred work from one trade to another. This fact alone has been a potent cause in shifting the lines of jurisdiction, some of which are still very much unsettled. Then, organization did not proceed from a comprehensive point of view to separate industries into their logical divisions, but, rather, the union, having undertaken to remedy conditions in some particular branch, has developed from small beginnings and has extended its jurisdiction as it grew in strength and as occasion arose. This accounts for the existence in the past of so many unions in closely allied trades, as for example, unions for carvers, for wood turners, for cabinet-makers, for furniture workers, for machine wood-workers, for piano and organ workers, for box-makers, etc. It also explains why the union does not control all the workmen in all branches of the industry, and furthermore, why in some cases the union has organized other than strictly wood workers. This overlapping of the branches and their subdivisions, then, is a problem in specialization of industry, and can be studied to best advantage by an examination of the wood working industry as a whole.

For sake of ease in presenting the subject the history of the wood working industry may be divided into three periods: (1) The period prior to the development of specialized tools and processes, ending about 1815; (2) the period of the invention and application of improved machinery and the beginning of specialization, ending about 1840; (3) the modern period, the period of factory production. Before proceeding further it should be stated that these dates have been chosen more or less arbitrarily, although not without some justification in the conditions existing in the industry. By 1815 evidence began to appear of the existence of both specialized tools and specialization in production. The year 1840 is chosen as a dividing line for two reasons; first, this was the first year that anything like reliable statistics of manufactures were published; second, the Woodworth rotary planer became a real success by the invention of the chip-breaker in 1842, thus greatly stimulating every branch of the trade.

THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED TOOLS AND PROCESSES

Historical records show that the wood working industry in some of its forms was one of the first occupations to engage the early inhabitants of every colony, located in the forest covered sections of the country. The building of a house, the making of rude furniture, the felling of trees in preparation for the cultivation of the land—these were the beginnings of the wood working industry. During this period, the pioneer settler had to be the architect of his own home, his own carpenter and builder,—in short, he had to be self-sufficient in this as in all other lines of his activities. The tools at his command were at first few and crude. He had to depend on the “axe and broad axe” to supply himself with lumber, until the saw-mill relieved him of that burden. Before the power saw-mill had been introduced, boards were made by “pit-sawing” in accordance with the method then in use in England. But this process was so simple that it could never have given rise to any extended organization or development, so that it need require in this connection only mere mention. Saw mills run by water power were introduced in very early colonial times. William F. Fox, in his “History of the Lumber Industry in the State of New York,” has shown from the old records that “in 1623, nine years after the first house was built in New Amsterdam, saw mills were erected there by the Dutch West India Company.” The machinery used was shipped from Holland, and was constructed to run by water power or by wind-mill. While there seems to have been a large number of mills erected during the next century, Mr. Fox concludes that “for the first two hundred years the mills were crude constructions and of small capacity, being limited to a single upright saw.”² The power used was an “over-shot water wheel,” and in different sections of the country, especially in New England, the desirable mill-sites were let to individuals by charters, as special privileges or monopoly grants, on condition

² William F. Fox *“History of Lumber Industry in the State of New York.”*
Bureau of Forestry Bulletin 24, p. 12.

that they build and put into operation a mill within a given date.³ Some idea of the size and character of the construction of these mills can be obtained by the repeated reference to the fact that the mills had been washed away by a spring freshet. Further evidence of the condition of the industry during this period may be indicated by the following facts. Prior to 1800 there were in Massachusetts only two establishments for the manufacture of agricultural implements, two furniture factories, and thirty-six lumber establishments.⁴ There is no further evidence of specialization in the industry, except in ship-building. Whenever the needs of the community exceeded the output of the local blacksmith and the carpenter, it was necessary to have recourse to importation. While the facts just cited indicate conditions in Massachusetts, yet there is every reason to believe that they are typical, and that conditions elsewhere did not vary much from those described.

THE PERIOD OF THE INVENTION AND APPLICATION OF IMPROVED MACHINERY AND THE BEGINNING OF SPECIALIZATION

An important change took place in the industry about 1815. Two important improvements were made at this time, which gave a tremendous stimulus to all lines of the industry, namely, the application of the steam engine to saw-mills, and the introduction of the circular saw.⁵ Although steam had been successfully applied prior to this date, certainly the use of steam as a motive power in saw mills did not become extensive until after 1815. Steam was probably first applied to the running of a saw mill in this country in 1798, as Robert McKean received a patent right on a steam saw mill on March 24th of that year.⁶ "In 1802 Oliver Evans of Philadelphia constructed a double acting high pressure engine for a boat to run between New Orleans and

³ For examples of these monopoly grants confer the following: D. H. Hurd, "*History of Rockingham and Stafford counties*;" M. T. Runnel, "*History of Sanbornton, N. H.*" and J. J. Dearborn, "*History of Salisbury, N. H.*"

⁴ *Mass. Census*, 1885, pp. 598-609.

⁵ The circular saw was introduced in England about 1790, but its inventor is not known. Sir Samuel Bentham made many improvements. A saw was patented by Trotter in 1804. Cf. E. H. Knight, *Amer. Mech. Dict.* Vol. I. p. 555.

⁶ J. L. Bishop, "*History of American Manufactures*," Vol. II, p. 80.

Natchez. On reaching the Mississippi River the boat was high and dry and could not be floated until the periodical rise of the river. The engine was therefore set up in a saw-mill and sawed at the rate of 3000 feet per day. This mill was burned by the hand-sawyers who thought their craft was in danger.”⁷ A circular saw was made with blacksmith’s tools by Benjamin Cummins at Bentonville, New York, about 1814.⁸ This is thought to have been the first circular saw made in this country, but its extended use was probably a few years later. The following quotation will serve to fix fairly accurately the date of the introduction of the circular saw. The quotation is typical of what begins to be seen very generally in the newspapers of the day.

“Messrs. Stewart and Hill of this city (Baltimore) have lately erected and put into operation in their steam saw mill a circular saw on an improved plan, the invention of Mr. Adam Stewart, for which he has obtained a patent. The saw is four feet or upwards in diameter and is peculiarly adapted to cutting veneers of mahogany. It took only four minutes to saw a veneer 7 feet long and 12 inches through and to run the carriage back. Eight veneers are cut out of one solid inch in thickness, each measuring about one-thirteenth part of an inch. It may be truly added that in regularity of thickness, they can not be surpassed. After a log is on the carriage, it is run by two boys,—the older is in his eleventh year.”⁹

The extension of the saw-mill was very rapid. In 1823 there were 964 saw-mills in New Hampshire,¹⁰ while only 959 were reported in 1840.¹¹ In 1825 there were 5195 mills in New York, 6948 in 1835, and 6356 in 1840.¹² The mills had already found a place among the industries of the western states. The census of 1810 reported 14 saw-mills in Indiana.¹³ The first steam mill to be erected in this state, of which there is any record, was

⁷ E. H. Knight, *Amer. Mech. Dict.*, Vol. III, p. 2041.

⁸ E. H. Knight, *Amer. Mech. Dict.*, Vol. III, p. 2033.

⁹ *The National Intelligencer*, July 22, 1817.

¹⁰ Farmer and Moore, *Gazetteer of N. H.*, pp. 49-64.

¹¹ John MacGregor, *Progress of America*, Vol. II, p. 666ff.

¹² *Bradford's Statistical Atlas*, under N. Y.

¹³ G. W. Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber Industry of the Northwest*, p. 29.

built in 1831.¹⁴ As early as 1810 a man by the name of Stewart erected a saw-mill in St. Clair County, Michigan.¹⁵ Another was erected in Macomb County sometime prior to 1812. In 1818 the "Pontiac Company" was organized for the purpose of purchasing land on Lake Huron in St. Clair County, but in 1819 the company selected a location in Oakland County, and erected a combination saw- and grist-mill.¹⁶ After 1820 the records show that a large number of mills were erected in Michigan in different localities of the state,¹⁷ and this increase in the number of mills continued through the decade between 1830 and 1840. There was a decided extension of mills also in Maine between 1820 and 1840. In 1820, 746 saw-mills were reported in the state, and in 1840 the number had increased to 1381.¹⁸

The center of the lumber industry was in the central Atlantic states. The six states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Maine and Massachusetts contained 60.8 per cent of all the mills of the country, and produced 54 percent of the lumber.¹⁹ While there had been an extension in the industry between 1820 and 1840, it was still in its infancy, as may be proven by the fact that the value of the yearly output per mill for the whole country was only \$409.00. The largest average output per mill in 1840 was \$2000.00 in the state of Arkansas. In only two other states did the yearly output exceed \$1000.00, namely in Wisconsin (\$1600), and in Maine (\$1300). Granting that the statistics are reasonably accurate,²⁰ these facts prove conclusively that the saw-mill industry was still in its infancy. While the value of lumber produced in any one state had not attained a very considerable sum, yet the aggregate value for the country as a whole was just under \$13,000,000. These facts indicate the following conclusions: First, the states in which wood working occupies a high place in the total value of the manufactures are

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-47.

¹⁸ Moses Greenleaf, *Survey of Maine*, p. 276.

¹⁹ Compiled from *U. S. Census*, 1840.

²⁰ It must be remembered that the returns in 1840 were not very complete, and this was especially true in respect to the returns for saw-mills. Yet I think the conclusions are safe

those of the south and west.²¹ It is interesting to notice in this connection that during this period those states have been tapped, which later have furnished the great source of supply. In the second place, the centers of production are located in the older states, thus indicating that the manufacture of wood had taken its place here along side of the other manufactures which the needs of the community had called forth. It probably indicates also that the raw material was beginning to be drawn from the outlying sections, while the manufacture of the timber was coming to be located near the markets for the products. The importance of Maine and Ohio in the industry indicates the probable line of development.

Besides the progress made in the lumber industry, which must necessarily precede specialization in the other branches, there was considerable development of the more specialized subdivisions. The facts indicate that ship-building and the manufacture of furniture were the two branches which were first run as separate industries. Shipbuilding was one of the first profitable employments of the colonists, especially in New England, and it showed a continuous development from that time to the third decade of the last century, when England began the policy of subsidizing her vessels and of constructing them of iron, and propelling them by steam. These improvements gave England a very great advantage in this industry. The center of shipbuilding in the United States was in New England.²² Maine early showed a development of this industry, as the following quotation will indicate. In 1829 it was said that "in shipbuilding and the various branches dependent upon it, she (Maine) greatly exceeds most states in the union, and with few exceptions, is probably equal to any."²³

The development of furniture making as a special industry

²¹ Compiled from *U. S. Census 1840*.

²² New England produced 25.1% of all wood manufactured in the U. S. excluding shipbuilding and 29.5% if shipbuilding is added. The relative percentages for the other sections are: Middle States 43.7%, including, and 40.6% excluding shipbuilding; the South 19.1% and 17.3%; the West 13.1% and 13%. Compiled from *U. S. Census 1840*.

²³ Moses Greenleaf. *Survey of Maine*, p. 271. Between 1820-1827 there were 1,317 vessels of all classes made in Maine. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

began during this period also, and it was due, in a large degree, to the introduction of power machinery specially adapted to the manufacture of furniture. "The substitution of the factory for the cabinet-maker may be said to have begun in 1815, when the first power machinery was introduced. By 1825 there was a number of small factories in the United States making furniture in a small way."²⁴ In Massachusetts in 1830 nine establishments were reported and in 1840, fifteen. As Massachusetts ranked third in the value of products in 1840 (second in number of establishments and capital invested), it seems safe to conclude that the conditions there were fairly representative. Two statements may be made concerning the industry at this time; first, that most of the specialization took place after 1830; and, second, that by the end of this decade furniture making had become pretty well developed as a separate industry. In 1840 the value of the total output was \$7,500,000; \$5,000,000, or 66 per cent of which was produced in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Ohio. The industry gave employment to 18,000 men, and represented a capital investment of nearly \$7,000,000. New York was the only state which had as much as \$1,000,000 capital invested in the industry. The yearly production in New York amounted to approximately \$2,000,000. In only two other states did the yearly production exceed \$1,000,000. These facts indicate that the industry had become specialized, but in comparison with the manufacture of furniture of today, it was in the very early stages of its development. There were four pretty well-marked centers of production at this time, namely, New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cincinnati. Perhaps the most striking feature of the trade was the prominence which Cincinnati held at this very early date. In 1819 there were 15 shops in this city that employed 84 men, and produced cabinet-work to the value of \$70,000, and 4 shops that employed 31 men, and turned out yearly, chairs to the value of \$25,000.²⁵ Here is not only evidence of specialization in the manufacture of furniture, but also of a development of sub-di-

²⁴ C. H. Cochrane, *Modern Industrial Progress*, pp. 79-83.

²⁵ *Cincinnati Directory*, 1819.

visions of the industry, which are of so much importance in its later history.

Besides the branches which have been treated, the statistics show that during this same period a number of other industries were beginning to develop, such as the manufacture of carriages and wagons, musical instruments,—a trade closely related to furniture making, where even today many of the same machines and processes are in operation,—cooper shops, billiard table manufactories, sash, door, and blind establishments,²⁸ and the manufacture of wooden ware, including box-making. These facts, therefore, warrant the conclusion that most of the important branches of the modern wood working trades had become separately worked industries before 1840. This fact has a very important significance in its bearing upon the development of organized labor in these trades.

From the foregoing facts the following conclusions may be drawn. First, about one-twelfth of the total value of manufactures in 1840 was some form of wood products. Second, there were two large divisions of the industry with the beginnings of several sub-divisions, which have later been developed into important branches. Third, that certain inventions and applications had been made during this period, which reduced very greatly the labor cost, and thus facilitated specialization. Fourth, that production in its various forms was centered at this time in New York, Maine, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey, and Vermont. And last, the prominence of the south and west in several of the branches, especially in the size of the saw-mills, pointed to the opening of the great timber regions of the country, and thus indicated the line of later development. It would be safe, therefore, to conclude that most of the important branches of the wood working industry were already in their early stages of specialization during this period.

THE MODERN PERIOD

The real development of the industry comes after 1840. It is not necessary to follow the growth by decades to show its im-

²⁸ *Cleveland Directory*, 1837. MacGregor, *Prog. of Amer.* Vol. II, p. 141.

portance, but a few statistics may be presented to indicate the relation of this growth to the application of machinery, to specialization, and to the rise and growth of organization. The following table will show the condition of the timber and lumber industry in New York from 1835 to 1900:

LUMBER AND TIMBER PRODUCTS OF NEW YORK

Saw-mills

Year	Establishments	Capital	Value of Products
1835	6,948	.....	\$6,881,055
1845	7,406	.....	7,577,154
1850 ²⁷	4,625	\$8,932,983	13,123,759
1855	4,946	9,893,237	14,655,103
1860	2,765	7,425,601	9,710,945
1870	2,510	15,110,981	21,238,228
1880	2,822	13,230,934	14,356,910
1890	1,734	21,430,739	17,160,547
1900	1,765	21,873,203	15,766,977

Planing Mill

1850	58	\$130,700	\$246,896
1855	98	1,069,300	3,121,297
1860	302	1,830,156	4,733,761
1870	590	6,593,552	12,471,112
1880	466	7,196,640	12,953,690
1890	540	24,078,662	33,765,173
1900	509	22,941,540	29,756,267

²⁷ Prior to 1850 the statistics of saw-mills included planing mill products.

Two things are clear from this table. In the first place, there was a decided decline in the number of establishments during the period considered; and in the second place, this was accompanied by a rapid increase in the amount of capital invested and in the value of products. Both of these facts are strikingly apparent after 1845. The increase in the output may be accounted for in a measure by the successful operation of the rotary planer, which gave a great stimulus to all kinds of wood working processes. The conclusions from these statistics for New York are borne out by federal statistics. The total value of manufactures in the United States had increased from \$483,275,215 in 1840 to \$1,019,106,616 in 1850, an increase of 110 per cent, while the value of wood products had increased from \$39,372,466 to \$128,-

150,763, an increase of 225%. Nearly 11% of the total value of manufactures—12.5% if ship-building be included—was composed of wood products. There was a decided growth in the relative importance of the wood working industries during the decade in all of the sections of the country, but especially in the West and South.²⁸

Since 1850 there has been a continuous growth, excepting the interval of the civil war, when all industries were materially affected. The industry in 1850, including lumber and planing-mill products, ranked second among the industries of the country with a value of \$58,520,000. In 1900 the lumber industry was fourth among the great manufacturing industries of the country, being exceeded in value of output only by the iron and steel, the textile, and the slaughtering and packing industries. The value of the products amounted to \$1,030,906,000, or 7.9% of the total value of all manufactures in the United States. The planing mill products alone in 1900 exceeded the total output in 1850 nearly five fold. During this period also there has been developed a high degree of specialization along all lines, and a consequent shifting of work from one branch to another, particularly in the direction of greater machine production. This specialization and the shifting trade lines is the explanation of the large number of separate unions that have been organized, and is the key to the jurisdictional difficulties with which the industry is almost continuously disturbed.

THE INFLUENCE OF MACHINERY

The success of the re-manufacture of wood depends in a large degree upon the application of power machinery. So long as the only method of manufacturing lumber was the old, slow process of "pit-sawing," this industry could not develop to any great proportions. Much the same thing can be said of the use of the water wheel. It was not until steam was successfully applied as the motive power in saw-mills, that large development was possible. Steam was successfully applied to the running of saw-mills in the United States as early as 1797, when Henry Dul-

²⁸ Compiled from *U. S. Census*, 1840.

heur took out a patent for a mill.²⁹ But the application of the steam engine was not sufficient to increase the product greatly until new processes of cutting became known. This leads to a consideration of the subject of wood working machines.

The manufacture of wood in its modern development requires a large variety of machines. Some of the leading manufacturers of wood working tools make as many as eighty different machines. The necessity for this may be accounted for by two facts. In the first place, the great variety of hardness among woods makes it necessary to have machines of special construction. Then, the operations in working wood are more varied than those of almost any other branch of manufactures. The development of these machines has been a long and slow process. At first machines were made by the carpenters, or the men using them, and not by engineers and mechanics as at present. This continued to be the case in the United States until about 1870, or thereabouts. Naturally, in the absence of scientific knowledge of shafts and pulleys, the machines were often crude affairs, the principal attention being given to the cutting edge, or in other words, to the largest returns in the shortest time. This fact accounts for the peculiar designs which may be seen among the exhibitions of early American wood working machinery.³⁰

Many of the processes and principles of wood working are of ancient origin. Next to the ax, the saw can lay claim to greater antiquity than any other wood working tool. The oldest treatises, relating to mechanics, have always had illustrated and described in its various modifications, the reciprocating saw.³¹ The transition from a parallel to a rotary action is perfectly simple, and the advantages are so obvious that it might reasonably have been supposed that this change would have been made at an early date. But rotary motion involves a knowledge of mechanical principles, which were little known in the early ages.³² Economy of time,—the principal difference between rotary and par-

²⁹ Cf. *List of Patents, 1790-1829*. Also p. 10.

³⁰ J. Richards, *Wood Cutting Machines*, pp. 32-39.

³¹ J. Richards, *Saws and Sawing Machines*, pp. 113-189.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

allel action—was no object nor incentive. These facts account for the recent invention of the circular saw.

The circular saw was first used in Holland, where it seems to have been known during the seventeenth century, a period when the Netherlands had placed itself in advance of every other country in so many branches of mechanical arts.³³ The circular saw has been developed however, in England and the United States, especially in the latter country, for here its application to lumber cutting on a large scale was first put into operation.³⁴

There are other wood working machines which are of ancient origin, especially the principle of their operation. The modern turning lathe, in which the work is suspended between horizontal centers, was commonly used by the Greeks and Romans.³⁵ When turning between centers was first used, the work had an alternating rotary motion. One of the earliest methods was by means of a cord, which encircled the work twice, having one end attached to an elastic pole and the other formed into a stirrup for the foot. On pressure with the foot, the work was rotated in the direction required for turning. It was similarly rotated in the opposite direction, when the foot power was released, and the cord drawn back to its original position by the elastic force of the pole. Another method was to pass the cord twice around the work, and an assistant, taking a cord in each hand, would, by pulling alternatively, produce the same effect as just described. Then came a modification of this method, which made it possible for one man to perform the operation by propelling the machine by foot power. A bow having several strings, which were fastened to a roller at their middle, was used to draw the cord to its original position. When the treadle was pressed down, the roller, which had the cord attached to it, was rotated, thereby winding the several strings about the roller and bending the bow. The removal of the pressure permitted the bow to reverse the motion. This method was quite an improvement, since the power

³³ J. Richards, *Ibid.*, pp. 113-189.

³⁴ It is claimed that an English patent granted to a man by the name of Miller in 1777, contained nearly all the elements of the modern American saw. Knight, E. H., *Mechanical Dictionary*, Vol. III, p. 2033.

³⁵ P. N. Hasluck, *The Handy Man's Book, Wood Working*, p. 454, also *Lathe Work*, p. 1-8.

was more uniform and could be adjusted with greater nicety.³⁶ From this process the step to the modern lathe with its shafts and pulleys was not great. All of the main principles were present in the former tools.

The great demand for rapidity of production and for uniformity of product has led to many improvements in these machines, so that now the rough material may be shaped, turned, and carved during one process, oftentimes while the lathe is going at the rate of more than 3000 revolutions per minute. The American variety lathe is an example of this sort, but the principle of operation remains the same, the latter machines justifying themselves by their economy. The high speed of modern revolving cutters is a great improvement, and has been made possible by a more thorough understanding of the mechanical principles involved. The greater speed not only enables the wood to be fed faster, but also the increased velocity of the cutting edge produces a cleaner and smoother surface. It is only within recent years that high speed has been thought possible. Formerly it was considered impossible to construct bearings that could withstand the strain. But this problem has been solved satisfactorily, and the attention is now given to the correct balancing of the cutter-heads, which are driven at high speed, since any deviation will result in bad work.³⁷

It is a curious fact that in the case of saw-mills, the United States developed successful machinery earlier than did England, while in the case of machinery for working lumber—that class of machines known as wood-working machinery—England preceded the United States by more than 30 years, and by a longer period still in the successful operation of such machines. The revolving planer owes its origin in England to Sir Samuel Bentham, a brother of the famous economist. Perhaps no mechanical art has been so fully developed and so nearly perfected at one time and

³⁶ P. N. Hashuck, *Lathe Work*, p. 5. A book by a man named Bergeron, published over a hundred years ago, contains illustrations of lathes driven by means of the bow. A German book, dated 1568, contains illustrations of a pole lathe. Hashuck, p. 6.

³⁷ P. N. Hashuck, *The Wood Turner's Handbook*, p. 72.

by one man, as that of wood cutting by Sir Samuel Bentham.³⁸ The immediate occasion for the invention was offered by his brother, who had received from the government in 1791 an appointment to introduce industrial prisons in England. This kind of labor was almost wholly devoid of skill, so Jeremy Bentham called in the talents of his brother to devise machines that would make the labor more profitable, and at the same time would replace to some extent the want of skill of the convicts. In 1793 and 1794 a successful planer was made. In 1797 these machines were introduced into the dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth.³⁹ Thus about the same time that the first steam engine was patented in the United States, the revolving planer was being successfully operated in England.

After 1820 activity in invention was transferred from the old to the new world. The first attempt in the United States to apply a rotary cutter and automatic feed rolls to the working of wood was made by a man named Hill. Owing to certain imperfections and after repeated trials the attempt was abandoned. About the same time William Woodworth, an old carpenter, residing at Poughkeepsie, New York, was experimenting in an old saw-mill upon the same thing.⁴⁰ His first machine was patented December 27th 1828. In this machine there was no other device

³⁸ Brigadier-General Samuel Bentham received his education at Westminster school. After completing his education here his talents led him to become an apprentice to a master shipwright of the Woolwich Dockyard, where he served the regular apprenticeship of seven years, during which time he became familiar with all kinds of practical manipulations in wood and metal, and received the best instruction that could then be obtained. When he had completed his apprenticeship, he spent eighteen months visiting other dockyards, thus becoming familiar with local peculiarities of tools and methods. In 1779 Bentham was directed by the government to make a tour in the north of Europe to examine the progress of shipbuilding and other arts. During this tour, while in Russia, he invented a planing machine for wood, which was probably the first operating planer. No accurate description of this invention has been preserved, but it may be inferred from his first patent in 1791 that it worked in the principle of a reciprocating machine. J. Richards, *History of Wood Working Machinery*, p. 4.

³⁹ I am indebted to J. Richards, *History of Wood Working Machines*, for these facts. It is stated that "to construct these machines the residence of Jeremy Bentham at Queen's Square Place, Westminster, was converted into the first manufactory of wood cutting machines." Richards, p. 3. Cf. E. H. Knight, *Amer. Mech. Dict.*, Vol. III, p. 2814, for list of wood working machines, invented by Samuel Bentham before 1800.

⁴⁰ The mill in which Woodworth was experimenting had to be guarded day and night to prevent journeyman carpenters from burning the mill.

for holding the lumber down to the bed, while being planed, than the feed-rolls, and as a result about six inches from each end was planed thinner than the rest of the board. This was the famous Woodworth patent which later brought on so much litigation, on account of the monopoly rights which had been invested in the owners of the patent. The machine did not become a success until after 1842, because of the defect just noted. But at that date a simple device, known as a pressure-bar, the function of which was to hold the board to the bed, and at the same time to prevent the cutter from "eatin' in," insured the success of the machine. The tremendous saving of labor over the old "jack" plane made this machine of inestimable value to all lines of wood working, and its success revolutionized the entire industry. It became successful, it is true, at a period of industrial expansion which greatly enhanced its value, but without the use of this machine the subsequent development of the wood working industries would have been materially retarded. The rapid growth of the industry after 1845 may be attributed to the three improvements that were made in the methods of production during the first half of the century, namely, the application of steam to saw mills, the invention and application of the circular saw, and the revolving planer.

CLASSIFICATION OF MACHINERY

Wood working machinery may be classified on the basis of the relative importance of the machine to the industry. They fall quite naturally into two groups, which may be called, for lack of better terms, *primary*, or those which have been revolutionary in their influence on the industry, or in the absence of which no other machines could have been successful; and *secondary*, those machines which justify themselves because of their economy, but which would be relatively useless, except for the existence of the primary group. Without attempting to make an inclusive classification of all wood working machinery, the following grouping has been made as an aid in understanding the relation of machinery to the growth of the industry. In the primary group should be placed, first of all, the circular saw, which,

driven by steam power, gave cheap lumber,—the raw material for all other branches of the industry. Naturally, this was of first importance to the industry. But cheap lumber was not the only important consideration. So long as the smoothing of boards had to be done by the old “jack” plane, the work could not proceed at a sufficiently rapid pace to supply the needs, except at a great labor cost. A power planer, therefore, was a necessity to the development of the industry. Notwithstanding the large number of labor saving machines, which are in operation, it seems clear that the circular saw and the revolving planer are of more vital importance to the industry, than any of the other machines. It has been urged by some that the band saw should be regarded as a primary machine, but the successful operation of the band saw gave simply greater economy in the production of lumber, and there is no such difference between this process and the circular saw, and the processes which were in operation before the introduction of the circular saw. For this reason the above classification has been made.

Now in the case of secondary machines, among which may be included the “cut off” saws, mortising machines, borers, tenoning machines, carvers, and so forth, many of the principles had been known and identical machines for iron work had already been in operation for a long time, so that as soon as cheap lumber was procured, a similar wood working machine was forthcoming. Naturally cheap lumber put a premium on the further development of other economical devices along all lines of the remanufacture of lumber. The compound carver and the “sander” deserve special attention, since they both have exercised an important influence on the development of the industry. The former enables one employee to turn out at one process from four to six pieces in less time than it took the same man to turn out one piece prior to the invention of the machine. However, the machine is dependent on cheap lumber for its success, and should, therefore, be classed as a secondary machine. In the case of the “sander” the saving of labor is quite as important, and besides, the resultant saving in the cost of production has made possible the successful operation of several other processes, which have increased the field for factory production. This would give

the "sander" some claim to being classed in the primary group, but here again it should be said that its success is dependent upon the existence of a supply of cheap lumber.

A good deal of attention has been given in recent years to the development of combination wood cutting machinery, as for instance, the Universal Planer,—machines which can be adjusted to do all the different processes of wood cutting. There are only two sets of conditions that call for a combination machine, one in the case of a very small shop, where one man can perform all of the machine work; the other, in a very large shop, where one man can do all the irregular work without disturbing the standard machines of the shop. But in all the largest shops, this economy is more than offset by the loss incurred by the frequent changes necessary to adjust the machine, so that it may be said that the modern tendency, under the influence of centralization of production and extreme division of labor, is to separate rather than to combine the processes.

THE EFFECT OF MACHINERY ON THE INDUSTRY

In the early days, as has already been shown, there was considerable opposition on the part of the laborers to the introduction of machinery, but this had pretty well disappeared by 1840. The rapid expansion of the industry at this time prevented any marked reduction of the wages. There was complaint on account of lower wages among the American cabinet makers between 1836 and 1846, but the cause assigned was the competition with the foreign mechanic, who was willing to work for a lower rate than the American mechanic, but who turned out an inferior product. The American mechanic at this time seems to have turned to the production of high grade furniture.⁴¹ In

⁴¹ "A great falling off in the earnings of cabinet makers has taken place during the last ten years. In 1836 an average hand could make by piece from \$12 to \$15 per week, and the pay to those who worked by the week was about the same. In 1840 wages fell to about \$8 per week, and now probably a majority of the journeymen in this trade do not make more than \$5 per week. Smart hands who work in establishments, where the very best kind of work is turned out, are paid \$8. The cause of the great decrease is in a great measure the immense amount of poor furniture manufactured for the auction stores. This is mostly made by Germans, who work rapidly, badly and for almost nothing. There

some lines there was a race between the hand worker and the machine product, particularly among some of the secondary machines. In the history of the carving machine, there was a long period in which it was an even race between the machine and hand labor. As late as 1872, Mr. Richards, writing on this point, says, "It has been an even race, to say the best, and gives no promise of gain in the future." He used labor saving as the test and estimated that under the most favorable conditions in such a branch as furniture making, the saving effected by machinery did not exceed 15% of its cost, and was much nearer 10% on an average. Furthermore, he attributed this saving to the greater possibility of a division of labor than to any real economy of the machinery. He recognized that machines should not be justified by economy in labor cost alone, but that precision and exact duplication may be in many cases more important than manual labor saved, and have an equal or greater effect in determining the value of the product. But certainly since the date of his statement, there has been a decided change. The smoothing, formerly done by hand by means of sand paper—a slow and therefore an expensive process—is done now by the "sander," by means of which it is estimated that one man does the work of from 12 to 15 men working by hand. Then, in regard to the compound carver, a machine which turns out from four to six duplicates, thereby increasing the output from four to six times over the spindle carver, and from 40 to 60 times over the hand carver, a very remarkable saving has been accomplished, so that at the present time hand production can by no means compete with machine production. Even the factories which are putting out high grade parlor furniture, and advertising it as hand made, are doing by far the greater part of the work by means of machinery. The highly skilled carver

are persons who are constantly watching for German emigrants who can work at cabinet making, even going on board the ships before the emigrants have landed, and engage them for a year at \$20 or \$30 and their board, or the best terms they can make * * * Within a few years a new branch of the cabinet making business has sprung up in New York,—the manufacture of Parisian furniture. Trusty and capable men are sent over to Europe to procure styles of furniture * * * Some of the Elizabethan, Louis XIV, Gothic, etc., styles of furniture got up in New York during the last two years has never been surpassed." *The Harbinger*, 1/10/1846, p. 72.

is still retained to give finishing touches and artistic expression to the work, but the volume of this work is relatively insignificant. A new class of skilled workmen has been created in the designer, the man who makes a study of styles of furniture, and works out the designs to be followed by the man at the machine. The improvements in the processes of production have greatly lowered the cost of all lines of wood products, notwithstanding the constant increase in the price of the raw materials.⁴² This is particularly true of furniture. Prior to these improvements the "piano finished" furniture was rare on account of the great labor cost of rubbing down the work. Upholstering was much more common than at present. But with the introduction of these new processes, lowering the costs in other lines, has made it possible to spend more time on the finish, so that what was formerly a very expensive furniture has now been put within the reach of the individual with an average income.⁴³ Another effect has been the seasonal changes in the furniture produced. The large concerns to-day change the style of furniture in much the same way that producers conform to the fashions in dress. But the most important effect of these improvements has been the constant extension of the factory product, thus causing shifting trade lines. From the point of organization this has been the disturbing element in the industry.

⁴² It is not absolutely true that there has been a decline in price of all wood products, for some kinds of wood have risen in price more rapidly than the fall due to improvements in production. Still another factor is the fact that a better grade of goods has been produced which makes comparisons difficult.

⁴³ It may be stated on the authority of one of the largest producers of high grade parlor furniture in Chicago, that a set of parlor furniture, upholstered with the highest grade of material, may be sold for \$165, whereas, if all the work were done by hand, the frames alone could not be sold for less than that sum.

CHAPTER II

TRADE ORGANIZATION PRIOR TO 1873

The facts that have been presented indicate that the manufacture of wood on a large scale did not take place until after 1840. Evidences of specialization, however, can be found as early as 1815, and continues to increase during the next two decades, during which time many of the most important branches of the industry become separately operated. During this same period there had developed a class of journeymen mechanics in many of these branches, whose interests were common, but they were not always in harmony with the interests of the master. This was especially true in the larger cities. The conditions, therefore, were ripe for trade organization. An examination of the newspapers of the day reveals that such organizations had come into existence, and in some trades had become an important factor in the industrial situation.

The history of this movement prior to 1873, may be conveniently divided into two periods, namely, the period before 1850, and that between 1850 and 1873. The year 1850 is taken as a dividing line because of the prominence of the German labor movement at this time. The first workmen to organize during the former period were the carpenters who had organized probably as early as 1806. Ship carpenters were organized as early as 1803. Between 1825 and 1830 organized carpenters had become strong enough in certain localities to conduct numerous strikes for a shorter work day. The cabinet makers seem to be the first men to organize among workmen strictly within the field of this study. The cabinet makers of New York had openly opposed prison work as early as 1823. A meeting was held in New York in May of this year to protest against the employment of prisoners at cabinet making. The *Mechanic's Gazette*,

in mentioning this, says, "The cabinet makers now begin to feel alarmed; they now are awakened to the sense of their interest and their duty in endeavoring to put a stop to this *vile* business of manufacturing in the prisons to the disadvantage of the mechanics, and the mechanics only."¹ There is no evidence of organization at this time. The first positive indication of a cabinet makers' union appears in May, 1833. The Journeymen House Carpenters in New York were on a strike at this time, and made an appeal to the cabinet-makers and to the Piano Forte Makers and Organ Builders. A meeting of the Journeymen Cabinet Makers was held at a Mr. Cronly's, to which the Piano Forte Makers and Organ Builders were invited to attend. The following resolutions were adopted at this meeting:

"Resolved, That we, as a body of mechanics, view with intense interest the present struggle of the Independent Journeymen House Carpenters.

"Resolved, That we consider their demands as just and equitable, and that we will use all honorable means within our power to assist them in obtaining their rights as *free men*.

"Resolved, That we, as citizens of a free country, view with indignation the autocratic attempts of a number of master builders, as they have been pleased to term themselves, to laud it over 'the bone and sinew of the nation.'"²

Signed, Thos. McDonald, Ch.

Peter Wood, Sec'y.

It is clear from this reference that the cabinet makers had been organized some time prior to this meeting. Both organizations contributed to the support of the strike.³ Further evidence of the movement at this time is seen in the fact that the Piano Forte Makers were themselves soon engaged in a struggle,

¹ *Mechanics' Gazette*, May 17, 1823, p. 3.

² *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, May 23, 1833, p. 2. *Ibid.*, May 24, 1833, p. 2.

³ The cabinet makers gave \$45.76 at one time, (*Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, May 25, 1833), and \$67.87 at another time, (*Ibid.*, May 28, 1833).

and received support from the Cabinet Makers.⁴ The year following the Cabinet Makers also were engaged in a strike.⁵ A General Trades' Union had been formed, with which the Cabinet Makers were affiliated. At a meeting of this General Trades' Union on March 12, 1835, the principal subject taken into consideration was the situation of the Cabinet Makers, who were endeavoring to establish a new book of prices. The old book, having been adopted in 1810, had been found deficient in various particulars. The General Trades' Union appointed a committee to confer with the Cabinet Makers in regard to their grievances.⁶ This committee reported favorably upon the principles for which the Cabinet Makers were contending, and recommended that the convention sanction the strike. Such a resolution was passed and a committee was appointed to confer with the Cabinet Makers during the strike.⁷ This strike attracted considerable attention. The attitude of the employers toward this and other cases of united action of the journeymen can be seen from the following quotation:

"There is a 'turn out' operation going on in this city at the present time, the object of which, as usual, is to obtain higher wages. The Journeymen Cabinet Makers are the actors. The different trades are combined in what is called a 'Trades' Union', and each in its turn is supported by the others in striking for higher wages. Within a year or two past, the Journeymen Printers, Journeymen Carpenters, Journeymen Shoe Makers, Journeymen Hatters, Journeymen Tailors, and we believe several other trades have successfully 'turned out', . . . and now come the Journeymen Cabinet Makers. We object to this mode of doing business. Free Trade is the proper regulator in such matters, and any attempt to force prices by Tariffs and Combinations will in one way or another fail of its objects. Besides, if

⁴ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Nov. 22, 1833, p. 3. The New York Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers passed a resolution on Nov. 19, 1833, approving their strike.

⁵ Schlueter, *Deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in America*, p. 5.

⁶ *The Man*, March 17, 1835, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid*, March 30, 1835.

the employed combine in this way, employers may be compelled to do the same in self-defence. They have done so in England and the result has been anything but favorable to the 'turn outs.'⁸

The Cabinet Makers held a conference with the employers on March 31, 1835, at which the question of the new book of prices was gone over, but without definite results, for there was a difference of opinion as to the amount of the increase in wages that should be allowed. The Committee of the Cabinet Makers gave it as their opinion "that the employers wish to abolish the system of working by a scale of prices, which is of such vital importance to our interests."⁹ This struggle was continued up into the year 1836 without much show of permanent success. It is clear from a set of resolutions adopted at a meeting of the Cabinet Makers in March of this year that the workmen were suffering from the high prices of this period, and that the main contention was for an increase of wages.¹⁰

⁸ *The New York Journal of Commerce*, April 3, 1835, p. 2.

⁹ *Working Man's Advocate*, April 11, 1835. The committee representing the journeymen was composed of the following names: William Smith, N. Pack, R. Folks, J. Junis, J. W. Martin, A. Shepherd.

¹⁰ *The Evening Post* (N. Y.), March 24, 1836, p. 3. The preamble and resolutions adopted at this meeting show the sentiment of the workmen at this time:

"Whereas, The continual schemes and machinations of a number of the employing cabinet makers in this city, to enslave and degrade the journeymen in their employ, by withholding part of what by right belongs to them, inasmuch as they refuse to give the price acknowledged to be just and right, and contained in the Book of Prices of the Benevolent Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers. The necessity of obtaining and establishing an equitable standard of prices at a time like the present, when all the necessities of life, house rent, etc., are so enormously high. We, therefore, feel it a duty incumbent upon us, to rouse from the lethargy which too long has enthralled us, and to do that which the comforts and necessities of our families so imperatively demand; at the same time, as we view with pleasure the course pursued by several employers in continuing to give the prices established last April, we deem it nothing but a duty we owe to them and to ourselves, to request our employers to give us for our labors what other men receive for the same amount of service; for why should we enable our employers to undersell honest and liberal minded men, by tamely submitting to their dictatorial and mean spirit, and work for wages that will scarcely enable us to procure the necessities of life, and fulfill our engagements honorably? Therefore be it

Resolved, That we will no longer work under the arbitrary and degrading system, but from and after the first day of April next, have determined to obtain and establish by every lawful means in our power, the price contained in that book brought out by the Benevolent Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers, and established by them in April, 1835.

After the Cabinet Makers, the Piano Forte Makers and Organ Builders seem to have been well organized during the decade under discussion. It appears that they were organized in 1831,¹¹ and continued in existence until 1845, when the union disappeared. In 1836 they protested against "the triumph of aristocracy and the degradation of the working men." They declare against the "extension of chartered combinations" and attributed to them the "flood of paper money" and "artificial values", which prevailed at this time. They also assert the "right of the workman to combine to maintain his compensation." "As labor is the only merchandise which the journey-men have in the market, they have a right to set a price on it, and those who will not enjoy the privilege are slaves and we recommend them and their masters to the attention of the abolitionists."¹²

Besides the two unions mentioned, the Carvers and Guilders sent delegates to the meeting called for the purpose of forming a General Trades Union in 1833.¹³ The Willow Basket Makers

Resolved. That we consider the before mentioned resolution strenuously called for, as a duty we owe to ourselves and to society, as we confidently assert that it is no more than a fair remuneration for our labor.

Resolved, That we will, as soon as practicable, cause ourselves to be joined to the before mentioned society, and use all lawful means to place our trade on such a basis as will insure us at all times fair and equitable prices for our labor.

Resolved. That we will use every effort in our power to frustrate the machinations of a certain class of employers, whose ambition it is to defraud their workmen out of their just rights, fully sensible at the same time that the wages they give are totally inadequate to the support of their journeymen.

Resolved. That we consider the late decision of Justice Savage regarding the legality of combinations as inconsistent with the genius of a free people, and view with contempt the conduct of that judge who would call to his aid the dormant laws of a nation whose law givers have been more notorious for their oppressive than their liberal or equitable laws. *Hudson Cordwainer's Conspiracy Case: People v. Cooper et al.*, 1836.

¹¹ *National Workman*, October 27, 1866. Reference is made at this time that a meeting was held, at which the books and papers of the old society were handed over to the society that had been recently formed. The fact is mentioned that the former society had been organized in 1831, and had continued until 1845, and was reorganized in 1853. A flag which had been born in the French Revolution by one of the refugees to this country was among the things turned over to the new society.

¹² *The Evening Post* (N. Y.), March 16, 1836.

¹³ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, July 26, 1833, p. 2.

were in a procession in December, 1833.¹⁴ The Blind Makers were also organized in 1833,¹⁵ and the Upholsterers formed a union in 1836.¹⁶ It is clear, then, that in New York a number of the trades falling within the field of this study were organized in the decade between 1830 and 1840.

The movement at this time was not confined to the city of New York, but a similar movement of organization is found in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and those cities in which the wood working trades had been developed as specialized industries. In each of these cities the cabinet makers were among the most prominent unionists. There was a uniform protest against the low wages and bad conditions that prevailed in the industry. The cabinet makers in Philadelphia organized to meet the constant reduction of wages which had gone on since 1830.¹⁷ The employers resented this action of the workmen, and placed as many obstacles as possible in the way of the unionists. Accusations of unfair discriminations against union men were made; and the union members were involved in "law-suits, harassing and ruinous in their effects."¹⁸ To meet this situation the cabinet makers started a plan of co-operation as early as 1833,¹⁹ and opened a ware room, where any member of the organization might offer for sale any cabinet work which he had made. Naturally this led to competition with the employers, who immediately dismissed the members of the union. The number of men who had been thus thrown out of employment and upon the young co-operative plant was given as nearly 200.²⁰ The

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, December 3, 1833.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, June 1, 1833.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1836, p. 2.

¹⁷ *The Pennsylvanian*, May 31, 1834, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May 31, 1834.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, October 3, 1833, p. 3. An appeal was made to the public for patronage, and an announcement made "that the Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers of the city of Philadelphia have been necessitated, on account of the inequivalency of their wages, to open a *wareroom* on their own responsibility, * * * where may always be obtained a variety of elegant, substantial, and warranted *cabinet-ware* at reduced prices, and, from the arrangements of the institution, they flatter themselves that they will be able to execute all orders with which they may be favored with equal neatness and dispatch to any other establishment in the city.

Crawford Riddle, Supt.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, May 31, 1834, p. 3.

pressure was too great, and the institution went to the wall about the middle of 1834. But this did not end the co-operative movement. In 1836 a central labor union was in existence, to which the cabinet makers belonged.²¹ A meeting of this Trades' Union was held February 2, 1837, at which there were nearly 200 persons present, to discuss co-operation, and it was claimed that the Trades' Union had raised \$12,000 from among its own members in six months.²² There are indications that the cabinet makers of Philadelphia had taken steps at this time to start a general co-operative movement among the cabinet makers of the United States.²³

Similar activity among the cabinet makers can be found in the District of Columbia and Baltimore as early as 1833.²⁴ A Mechanics Convention was held in Baltimore on September 4, 1833, and among the delegates were 5 coach makers, 4 cabinet makers, 5 coopers and 3 chair and ornamental painters.²⁵ The United Journeymen Cabinet Makers of the District of Columbia adopted the Baltimore "Book of Prices" in October, 1836, and signed agreements with the employers in Alexandria, Washington, and Georgetown.²⁶ The spirit of organization extended to Cincinnati and Louisville, Ky. A communication through the medium of the *National Laborer* from the Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers of Cincinnati, stated that the employers had notified them that "there would have to be a deduction from the "Book of Prices," or dispensed with altogether,²⁷ whereupon all hands immediately quit work. The same communication announced that the employers of Louisville had demanded a reduction of 20% from their "Bill of Prices," which would make the wages 15% less than in 1834.

²¹ *National Laborer*, April 23; July 9, p. 63; Nov. 19, 1836, p. 139; Feb. 11, 1837, p. 187.

²² *National Laborer*, Feb. 11, 1837, p. 187.

²³ *The Pennsylvanian*, Dec. 24, 1833, p. 3. "A correspondence with all the Journeymen Societies of the trade in the U. S., is particularly requested, directed to the Journeymen Cabinet Makers, No. 48, South Fifth St., Philadelphia. By order of the Society, Samuel Adams, Corresp. Sec'y."

²⁴ *Baltimore Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, July 27, 1833, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Sept. 6, 1833, p. 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 19, 1836, p. 3.

²⁷ *National Laborer*, Jan. 1, 1837, p. 167.

There was another branch of the trade which was pretty well organized at this time, namely, the coach makers. The Baltimore Coach Makers were organized in 1833,²⁸ and were endeavoring to establish a ten hour day. In 1836 they joined the smiths, the painters, and the trimmers in New York and Brooklyn to secure an increase of wages on account of the rise of the price of provisions and rents.²⁹ In Philadelphia they were organized, and were affiliated with the "Trades Union" of that city.³⁰ A more complete record of this period would, no doubt, reveal a more extensive union movement, but a sufficient number of facts have been given to prove that organization had become general during the decade between 1830 and 1840. The cause for this movement was the attempt to prevent a reduction of wages, and thereby to maintain the standard of life.³¹ The employers were exerting themselves to prevent the spread of unionism, and were successfully prosecuting the unionists.³² The whole union movement collapsed during the panic of 1837, and did not become general again until after 1850.

²⁸ *Baltimore Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Aug. 21, 1833, p. 2. The Journeymen Coach Makers met on Aug. 14th, and the committee, appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws, reported work done. A committee of five was appointed to confer with the employers and find out their sentiments on a ten hour day.

²⁹ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, March 21, 1836, p. 2. At this meeting the following resolutions were adopted:

1. That in consequence of the rise of provisions, rents, etc., we will endeavor to obtain an advance of our wages in proportion.

2. That we consider an increase of twenty-five cents per day a fair compensation.

3. That those who work by the piece advance their prices in the same ratio.

4. That we consider the first of April next a proper time to carry these resolutions into effect.

³⁰ *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836, p. 51. *Ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1836, p. 83. *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1837, p. 2.

³¹ Strikes to raise wages were general in the cities throughout the country (Cf. Schluter, p. 51). Schluter tells us that the feeling ran so high against the speculators in meal in New York in 1837, that a riot broke out there, and about 5,000 men marched down Washington street to the market, and tore down the ware houses of the speculators. (*Ibid.*, p. 7).

³² *Case of People v. Cooper et al.*, 1836, came in for a good deal of criticism by the workmen. Cf. Schluter, p. 5. He states that the employers sought the courts in their aid against the labor movement, and laborers were imprisoned on account of striking.

TRADE ORGANIZATION BETWEEN 1850 AND 1873

The revival in trade organization on a large scale did not take place until 1850, when the German laborers became a dominant factor in several trades. During the preceding decade certain branches of industry were almost exclusively in the hands of German laborers, such as furniture making (Möbel Schreinerei), tailoring, piano manufacturing, etc.³³ Several Germans became prominent in the labor movement at this time and succeeded in giving stamp to the character of that movement during the next decade. Among the most prominent of these were Herman Kriege, who landed in America in 1845, and who founded in 1846 the first German labor paper published in America; and Wilhelm Weitling, who made his first visit to the United States in 1848, and who became the prime mover during the first half of the next decade. Besides these several other less prominent men were influential prior to 1850.³⁴

The real movement, however, began in 1850. In the spring of that year the workmen in several trades in New York City had carried on successful strikes and had secured, according to Weitling, increases in wages amounting to about 25%.³⁵ A distinct movement to organize was begun both among the German and English laborers. In April of the same year the first central union of German laborers met in New York, and was known as the "Central Committee of the United Trades in New York."³⁶ The meeting was composed of delegates from the following organizations: The bakers with a membership of 320, half of whom were Americans; the shoemakers with 250; the cabinet makers with 700; the tailors with 100; the upholsterers with 120; the turners with 63; the carvers with 92; mechanics with 40; and bonnet makers and furriers with 40. There were representatives also in this meeting from a branch of the American Protective Union (80), from the Social Reform Union (200),

³³ Schlueter. *Ibid.*, p. 128. The Cabinet Makers (Tischlers) had associations in 1846 in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New York. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁴ Schlueter. *Deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in America*, pp. 17-28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79-80.

³⁶ "Zentralkommission der Vereinigten Gewerbe in New York," *Ibid.*, p. 131.

and from a labor union in Williamsburg (100), and from another in Newark (100). The total membership represented in this central union was estimated at 2400. In May or June of the same year there was formed in New York under the influence of the German organization an English central body, which was called the Industrial Congress, and was for the English workmen what the Central Committee was for the German laborers. The Industrial Congress was composed of from 80 to 90 delegates, who represented several thousands of organized laborers. The Building Trades Union had 8000 members, and another had 5000. Several German trades were represented also in this Congress, and the Central Committee, representing all the German laborers, had five delegates.³⁷ The workmen in the different branches of the wood working trades were prominent in this movement; in fact, the movement began among the cabinet makers of the city, and spread to the other trades, among which were the turners and carvers. This movement became general and resulted in the first German-American Labor Congress, which met in Philadelphia in October, 1850.³⁸ There were present at this meeting representatives from trade organizations in St. Louis, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, New York, and Buffalo, and from general unions in Louisville, Williamsburg, Newark, Cincinnati, Marysville, Wisconsin, Detroit, Rochester, Dubuque, and Trenton. Weitling estimated that the total membership of the affiliated unions was about 4400. Of this number 1403, or nearly one-third, were cabinet makers, turners, and carvers. The cabinet makers were particularly strong. They were separately organized in New York in 1850, and had a membership of 946. Out of 260 members of a union in Buffalo, 188 were cabinet makers.³⁹

This movement was not strictly a trade union movement. Wilhelm Weitling, through his labor paper—*Die Republik der Arbeiter*—was the champion of the cause, which was to a large extent a co-operative and communistic scheme. The program may

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131.

³⁸ *Die Republik der Arbeiter*, Nov. 1850, p. 174. Also *Schlueter*, p. 83. The figures of Weitling are not entirely reliable. Cf. *Schlueter*.

³⁹ *Die Republik der Arbeiter*, Nov. 1850, p. 174. Also *Schlueter*, p. 83-84.

be illustrated from the cabinet makers union in New York, as the constitution of this organization shows that they were under the influence of Weitling's principles. The aim of the body was to organize around a general trades association with co-operative shops and co-operative stores under the control of the central officials, and with an exchange bank as an essential feature of the plan. Connected with this co-operative-socialistic system of production, were some purely trade union features, but the organization of industry, especially in the mind of Weitling, was for the purpose of furnishing the basis for his larger co-operative system of industry.

This co-operative feature of the labor movement was continued by Weitling during his life time, but a breach developed among the German laborers on this point, and after 1852 Weitling's influence became less important. A portion of the German workmen desired to form unions after the model of the English trade unions, for the purpose of raising wages. The ideas of Weitling, however, continued in the minds of the workmen long after the organization which he helped to establish had disappeared. Throughout the remainder of the decade the labor movement was more or less broken up and spasmodic. The conditions demanded organization, but it seemed impossible to present a united front. In the spring of 1853 there were an unusually large number of strikes for higher wages.⁴⁰ Among these were the carpenters (Zimmerleute), who demanded a daily wage of \$2.00. The German and English piano makers formed a joint organization, and demanded an increase of 15% in daily wages. Their pay had been from \$8 to \$14 per week. The pay of the cabinet makers had fallen as low as \$6 per week.⁴¹ Schlueter estimated that in 1853 there were 150 shops in the City of New York, engaged in cabinet making, which employed not less than 4000 men, including 300 carvers, 400 upholsterers, and 300 chairmakers. The Cabinet makers were organized and were paying a strike benefit of \$3 per week.⁴²

The efforts of the German laborers of New York to improve

⁴⁰ *Schlueter*. p. 133.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

their condition in the spring of 1853 were guided by a central labor union, which owed its existence to Joseph Weydemeyer. It was founded in March and was at first called the General Labor Union, a name which was later changed to the American Labor Union, in order to distinguish it from Weitling's labor Union.⁴³ The aim of Weydemeyer and those associated with him, was to form a "union of all laborers of the United States without regard to nationality, for the purpose of reforming the conditions of labor."⁴⁴ The plan involved the organization of the workmen into an independent political party.⁴⁵ Naturally Weitling opposed the new organization as a trade union competing with his own labor organization. But notwithstanding the opposition of Weitling and his followers, the new union exercised a significant influence upon the German labor movement. During the summer of 1853, when work had become slack, the employers began to cut wages, thus undermining the advantages gained by the workmen during the spring months. This action met with a great deal of remonstrance among the laborers and led to the holding of a trades' assembly. Not less than 40 organized trades were represented in this meeting, and it was decided to hold a trades congress to discuss the methods of improving the conditions of labor. The Congress met on September 13th, and formed a new labor union—The Amalgamated Society—and adopted the platform of the American Labor Union (German). This was an English organization and for a time brought life to the English movement, but its influence soon weakened and the organization passed out of existence.⁴⁶ During this same year the Workingmen's National Association was formed in Washington under the leadership of Sam Briggs. These separate movements indicate the efforts of the laborers to

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 136. It was first called Allgemeiner Arbeiterbund, but was later changed into Americanischer Arbeiterbund.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136. An effort was made to spread this organization throughout the country. "All laborers without distinction, whatever trade he may follow, can belong to this union, all unions, without regard to their aims, whether political, trade, beneficent or only social, can belong to this union, if they only recognize the object of the union."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

improve their conditions and they show at the same time that no general, concerted movement had yet developed.

Toward the end of the decade the trade union movement took on new life, and the socialistic tendencies of the earlier period were still leading features of the organizations. In December 1857, steps were taken to reorganize the old Labor Union (American Labor Union), and a delegate meeting was held on January 16, 1858, which completed the reorganization of this body.⁴⁷ The cabinet makers, piano makers, and carvers were prominent in this movement. Early in 1858 a Cabinet Makers' Association was formed in New York that affiliated with this general union. It was open to every "competent cabinet maker, carver, and turner upon payment of the entrance fee of \$5. The union had a cooperative side. Each member was required to contribute \$50.00 to the business capital, which was placed under the management of an elective committee.

The organization provided for sick benefits and for tool insurance in case of loss by fire. This organization seems to have had a short existence, but the cabinet makers were soon organized again. In February 1859, they united under the name of "The United Cabinet Makers of New York," an organization which has had continued existence from that date to the present time. It has taken an active part in the labor movement in New York, having been a prime mover in the agitation which resulted in the formation of the Furniture Workers' International Union of America, and is now local No. 309 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters.⁴⁸

During these years the Piano Makers also were active. They made a demand for an increase of wages in March 1859, and were engaged in a strike against Steinway & Son, Hazelton, Leichte & Bradbury, Roben Baecon & Co. and Fischer Stattert.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-167.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 176. On April 3, 1884, this union celebrated its anniversary. It was then local No. 7 of the I. F. W. U. of A. The following members who had helped to organize the union were present: Peter Keim, A. Wrede, A. C. Thies, Fr. Weicke, H. Peters, Adam Volz, K. Mueller, Wm. Wagner, H. Wolf, Herm. Schmidt, Kneif, Rossmann, Breul, and Roedleim. *Meobel-Arbeiter-Journal*, April 25, 1884.

⁴⁹ *Soziale Republik*, April 12, 1859; April 19, 1859.

This strike continued throughout April and was finally successful. On the 27th of April a meeting was held to discuss their grievances, and it was estimated that 600 piano makers were present.⁵⁰ This organization had a tool insurance benefit, but it was optional with the membership whether they participated in this feature of the union activity. Each member could insure his tools against loss by fire or water for a sum ranging from \$50 to \$150. This benefit was conducted on the principle of mutual insurance. A charge of 4% of the insured value was made for the first year, and thereafter the members were assessed on the basis of a percentage of the loss.⁵¹

The Cabinet Makers were organized in other cities also, especially in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Louisville, Cincinnati, Williamsburg and other places in the East.⁵² These organizations were local unions, perhaps in some cases affiliated with a central labor body. There was no concerted action among the cabinet makers at this time, although some efforts were made looking to this end, but the Civil War delayed for a decade the formation of such a body. With the exception of the cabinet makers union in New York, there is no evidence that any of the organizations of this date survived the war period. The results of this decade upon organization among the wood working trades were, first, to impress the movement with socialistic views, which were retained in the principles of the Furniture Workers' Union and which have been inherited by the present Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union; second, to give the workmen experience and discipline in the trade union movement. Gradually, by the process of a survival of the fittest, the socialistic and impracticable schemes gave way to purely trade union methods of improving their conditions of labor. While many of the laborers still retained their socialistic theories, this did not prevent them from adopting practical methods for advancing their immediate interests.

Soon after the war the workmen in the various branches of

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, May 30, 1859.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 28, and Feb. 18, 1859.

⁵² *Schlucter*, pp. 176-177. Also *Societe Republik*, April 2 and May 16, '59.

the wood working trades began to demand higher wages on account of the increased cost of living, due to the high prices of this period.⁵³ There is no evidence, however, of any concerted action among the wood workers until after 1870. What seems to be the first attempt to organize the laborers in all the wood working trades into a single union, was made at Syracuse, New York, in January 1872, when the National Wood Workers Mechanics' Union was formed. Henry Wilkie, a coach maker of Syracuse, is credited with having conceived the idea of organizing all wood workers into a common union.⁵⁴ The first meeting of this organization was held January 18, 1872, and 104 signatures were received the first night. The new union embraced representatives from 15 different trades.⁵⁵ Joseph A. Griffin was chosen president of the organization and edited the journal which the union published for a short time.⁵⁶ The union provided for a separately organized insurance department, and kept an intelligence bureau, indicating the state of trade, the rate of wages and the number of workmen out of employment in the different cities. The organization was of short duration. A letter to the Cabinet Makers meeting in Cincinnati the next year indicated that they were unable to send a representative to that meeting on account of a lack of funds, but the union later became local No. 15 of the Furniture Worker's Union.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Arbeiter Zeitung*, Nov. 25, 1864; Sept. 29, 1865; Nov. 17, 1865. The carvers, varnishers, and cabinet makers in New York were demanding an increase of 10% in wages on account of the increased cost of living.

⁵⁴ *Workingmen's Advocate*, March 23, 1872.

⁵⁵ *The American Workman* (Boston), June 15, 1872. The trades making up this union were as follows: Pattern makers, piano and other musical instrument makers, wagon and wheel wrights, cabinet makers, carpenters and joiners, millwrights, car builders, agricultural tool workers, lumber inspectors, sash, door and blind workers, ship and boat builders, turners, sawyers, coopers, and stair builders.

⁵⁶ The officers of the organization were as follows: President, J. A. Griffin; first vice president, Moses Hinckley; second vice president, S. E. Sloan; third vice president, F. Hunt; fourth vice president, W. Van Aiken; secretary, A. R. Walker; treasurer, H. Wilkie; conductor, J. Hopper; doorkeeper, J. R. Roblin.

The officers of the insurance department were: B. T. Wilbur, secretary; L. P. Church, S. N. Lasher, W. H. Chase, E. J. Evans, and H. H. Evans, trustees. (*Workingmen's Advocate*, March 23, 1872).

⁵⁷ *New York Arbeiter Zeitung*, Dec. 6, 1873.

PART II

THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION, STRUCTURE, AND
POLICIES OF THE AMALGAMATED WOOD WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AMALGAMATED WOOD WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA

THE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE WORKERS' UNION

The labor movement in the wood working trades has now been followed from 1830 to 1873. It has been shown that a considerable activity existed among the wood workers in the early '30's, but that the organizations of that time did not survive the crisis of 1837. It has been shown also that the spirit of organization began to revive during the latter part of the fourth decade, when the German laborers got control of certain branches of the industry, and further, that the German leaders stamped the movement during the next decade with socialistic principles. Naturally, the extension of organization was abruptly checked by the Civil War, and it did not regain its former strength until after 1870, when there was a revival of the activity to organize the laborers, especially in those cities in which unions had formerly existed.¹

Up to 1873 the movement, with one exception of minor importance, had been local in extent.² It had been an endeavor to unite all the workmen in a given trade in a city into a common organization, which was, in some cases, affiliated with a central labor body. However, the feeling in favor of a national organization became general after 1870 and steps were taken to form a

¹ The agitation in Baltimore was fairly typical of the movement in other centers. In 1871 a French section of the International Workingmen's Association published a call in one of the daily papers, inviting all who were interested to attend a meeting. The result was the formation of a German section of the International. There were a good many furniture workers in this German section, and the accounts which they gave of the conditions of employment in this industry, started an agitation which led to the formation of a Furniture Workers' Union. This organization later became a local of the I. F. W. U. Cf. *Wood Workers' Journal*, April, 1894, p. 3.

² Cf. p. 48.

general wood workers' union. The first specific and authoritative announcement that a movement had been started to organize all wood workers appeared in the *New York Arbeiter Zeitung* on April 4th, 1873, over the signature of C. Speyer, Corresponding Secretary of the United Cabinet Makers' Union of New York.³ This notice announced that the United Cabinet Makers of New York intended to issue a call for a general assembly, or congress, of wood workers from all parts of the United States. A committee of that organization was appointed to communicate with the locals throughout the country, and to solicit their co-operation. Active work was begun about April 1st, and the call was definitely issued on April 12, 1873. It was at first suggested that the meeting be held in Cincinnati during the first week of May, but the date was finally fixed for July 7, 1873.

There were present at this first meeting of the wood workers twelve delegates, representing sixteen local organizations then in existence in different parts of the country.⁴ The new union organized under the title of "Der Gewerkschafts Union der Moebel-Arbeiter Nord Amerika." The union continued under this name until September, 1882, when a reorganization took place and a new constitution was framed under the title of the "International Furniture Workers' Union of America." The change in the name at this time was occasioned by a change

³ The call was issued from the Cabinet Makers' Union of New York, but the fact that such a meeting was to be held was pretty generally known some time before the call appeared. A notice appeared in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* that the Cabinet Makers' Social Union had discussed in February the question of holding general congress at Cincinnati in May. Cf. *New York Arbeiter Zeitung*, Feb. 15, 1873.

⁴ *Proceedings of the First Convention*, pp. 5-7. The delegates present and the locals represented were as follows:

A. Stehle, Carpenters' Union, Cincinnati, O.; R. Göhst, Chair Makers' Union, Cincinnati, O.; Fr. Fischek, Chair Makers' Union, Cincinnati, O.; G. Hörich, Furniture Makers' Union, Chicago, Ill.; Ch. Chelius, Carpenters' Protective Union, Evansville, Ind.; A. Meyer, Carpenters' Protective Union, Louisville, Ky.; J. Lips, Mechanics' Union, Louisville, Ky.; Fr. Homrighausen, Union of Cabinet Makers, New York, N. Y.; Ibid., Union of Cabinet Makers, Rochester, N. Y.; Ibid., Sawyers, Planers, Turners & Moulders, New York, N. Y.; C. Speyer, Union of Cabinet Makers, New York, N. Y.; Ibid., Carvers' Association, Rochester, N. Y.; O. Lehder, Social Cabinet Makers' Association, Philadelphia, Pa.; O. Lehder, a mass meeting, Philadelphia, Pa.; K. Renber, Cabinet Makers' Mutual Protective Union, San Francisco, Cal.; A. Horchert, Carpenters' Protective Union, St. Louis, Mo.

in the policy of the union for the purpose of organizing the English workmen in the trade. The Furniture Workers' Union thus formed continued in existence until its amalgamation in November, 1895, with the "Machine Wood Workers' International Union of America."

The membership of the new organization was estimated at the time of its formation at 1,885. During the hard times which followed the panic of 1873, the new union maintained its existence with the greatest difficulty. The membership declined and some of the locals either disbanded, or lapsed their membership. After the re-organization in September 1882, a good deal of attention was given to agitation, both through the Journal and by the personal efforts of the officials and the business agents of the organization. The number of locals in good standing at the beginning of 1884 was ten. The membership had been given as 1,441 and 1,638 at the conventions in 1880 and 1882, respectively. It was stated at the convention in 1884 that the membership had increased 104% since March 1883. Under the impetus of the eight hour movement, the number of locals increased to 25 by the latter part of 1886. During the first half of this year the membership increased very rapidly, and was estimated at one time at 10,000, but the decline was as rapid as the increase. There was little change in the number of locals until 1889, when there was a loss. Renewed activity was begun in 1890, and the growth, measured in terms of the number of locals composing the organization, was continuous up to the latter part of 1894. The largest number of locals in good standing at any time was 54, the number affiliated with the Union in July and October 1893.⁵ These locals were distributed throughout fifteen states. The number of locals fell off from 50 on January 1, 1895, to 31 in July of the same year. The membership of the organization at the time of the amalgamation was given as 634, since only 11 of the locals came into the new organization.

The Furniture Workers' Union was established for the purpose of organizing all workmen directly engaged in the manufacture of furniture, such as cabinet makers, turners, wood

⁵ These facts have been compiled from the files of the Journal.

carvers, machine wood workers, upholsterers, varnishers, and gilders.⁶ The membership of the union was at first composed almost wholly of Germans, but after the re-organization, the policy of the union was broadened to include other nationalities and particularly the English workmen in the trade as well. The union continued to organize the workmen in the furniture factories until jurisdictional troubles, arising from the over-lapping of separate organizations, led to the demand for a general union to include the workmen in all branches of the wood working trades, a demand which culminated in the formation of the Amalgamated Union in 1895.⁷

THE MACHINE WOOD WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION; ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH

After 1873 and indeed even prior to this date, important improvements were made in the methods of manufacturing wood products, which tended in the direction of greater specialization of processes, and a consequent division of labor. The rapid growth of the factory system and the extensive application of power machinery had developed a large group of workmen with particular interests, who were known as machine hands. These workmen were not separately organized until 1890. The Furniture Workers' Union had admitted to membership the machine hands that were engaged in the furniture factories. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters also admitted into its locals the machine men employed in the planing mills, and even formed separate machine hand locals.⁸ Besides the efforts of these two organizations, there were a few isolated locals in different parts of the country in such centers as Boston, Chicago, St. Louis,

⁶ *Const.* 1876, par. 1.

⁷ Cf. arguments in favor of amalgamations, p. 61-70.

⁸ In his report to the convention of the U. B. of C. in 1888, Secretary McGuire stated that three unions affiliated with that organization were exclusively planing mill hands, and two others were sash, blind, and door makers. (Cf. *Proceedings 5th Gen. Conv.*, p. 12). In his report to the convention in 1890, it was claimed that the number of locals of planing mill hands had increased to 21, three of which were sash, blind, and door makers, and five more were exclusively stair builders. (Cf. *Proceedings 6th Conv.*, p. 16).

Denver and Omaha, but there had been no attempt to organize these workmen into a separate general union.⁹

The preliminary steps toward forming a national union in this branch of the industry were taken by a Machine and Turners' Union located in Denver, Colorado.¹⁰ A committee of three members was appointed in February 1890 to undertake the task of finding out whether such an organization was possible. The committee communicated with the Wood Turners' Union of Boston and the Omaha Wood Machinists' Union, and the co-operation of both of these organizations was secured. A joint committee was then formed and circulars were sent to about eighty different cities for the purpose of ascertaining where unions of machine hands, turners, and general wood-working machine operators were located. Twenty replies were received, most of which stated that no such unions existed in the localities addressed, but nearly all of the correspondents expressed the hope that the undertaking would be successful. The committee then made a list of all the unions it had thus secured, and issued a call for a convention to be held in St. Louis on August 5, 1890. Before the convention met assurances of affiliation had been received from eleven unions, representing a membership estimated at 1,300. Only six of these organizations were represented in the first convention, which was composed of four delegates, namely, T. I. Kidd of Denver, Frank Heacock of Omaha, M. S. Peyton of Chicago, and John Green of St. Louis.¹¹ The

⁹ There was a Bohemian local in Chicago that was organized about 1880, which is said to be the oldest machine hands union in the country. Cf. M. W. W., Dec. 1890, p. 3; also Oct. 1891. The latter reference makes it appear that the first union may have been organized a few years earlier. It is altogether probable that such organizations existed elsewhere, but there are no records to prove it definitely.

¹⁰ These facts are taken from the account of the founding of the union, as given in the *Journal*, Dec. 1890, p. 1. There is evidence to indicate that this was not the first attempt to organize the machine wood workers.

¹¹ President's report to the second convention, *Journal*, Sept. 1891, p. 2. T. I. Kidd was the moving spirit in this convention, and it may be fairly said that no organization was so completely the work of one man as the Machine Wood Workers' International Union was the work of T. I. Kidd. He took the initial steps in bringing it into existence, and served it in the capacity of General Secretary from the date of founding until January, 1905, when he voluntarily retired.

most important work of this convention was the framing of the constitution, and the setting forth of the objects and purposes of the new organization. There was a division from the first over the name to be adopted. The cause for this division was the fact that two of the unions represented were composed of benchmen, as well as machine men, and they were anxious that the new organization should imply by its name that all mill workers were eligible to membership. Finally it was argued that the results of such a policy would bring the new organization into conflict with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the Furniture Workers, as these two organizations were already admitting benchmen to membership. This argument prevailed, and it was decided to form a union composed exclusively of machine operators. It was then decided to adopt the name of Machine Wood-Workers' International Union of America.

After the constitution was completed, a permanent organization was formed and the following officers were elected and installed: General president, John Green of St. Louis; first vice-president, Frank E. Heacock of Omaha; second vice-president, Milo S. Peyton of Chicago; general secretary-treasurer, Thomas I. Kidd of Denver. It was decided to leave the selection of a third vice-president to the Boston union, and a fourth to the San Francisco and Omaha unions.¹² The convention instructed the general secretary to apply to the American Federation of Labor for a certificate of affiliation with that organization. This certificate was granted December 22, 1890.¹³ The general secretary was further instructed to issue a trade journal, devoted to the interests of the new organization. The first number of the Journal was issued under the name of Machine Wood Workers' Journal.¹⁴ Finally there was introduced and accepted

¹² *Machine Wood Worker*, Dec. 1890, p. 1. Brief sketch of the first officers.

¹³ Application was made Nov. 11, 1890, and the matter was referred to the Executive Board of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and as there was no objection raised by that body, the charter was granted. Cf. *Machine Wood Worker*, Sept. 1891, p. 2.

¹⁴ The name of the journal at first was *Machine Wood Worker*, but it was changed to the *American Wood Worker* in order not to conflict with the Journal of the furniture workers. And it was changed at the time of Amalgamation to the *International Wood Worker*. Cf. *American Wood Worker*, Aug. 1895, p. 5.

a proposition to submit to the locals for approval, a system of death and disability benefits. These constitute the most important transactions of the first convention of the Machine Wood Workers' International Union.

At the time of the formation there were only 260 members, but during the year there was very satisfactory growth, both in locals and in membership, the former having increased from 4 to 18, and the latter from 260 to 1,050. Between the second and third conventions 32 locals were added, and as four had lapsed their membership, there remained 47 locals in good standing with jurisdiction in 40 cities and 16 states, besides Canada and the District of Columbia.¹⁵ During this time the union had gained a foothold in 26 more cities and 9 more states. The membership had increased from 1,050 to 3,487, of which nearly one-third were not in good standing. The extension of the organization was left to the general officers, who were expected to make every effort to organize their respective districts.¹⁶ The General Executive Council was empowered to appoint as organizers any member recommended by one of the general officers,¹⁷ but the power of these organizers was pretty effectively restricted, as no organizer was permitted to incur expenses in the name of the union without the sanction of the General Executive Council.¹⁸ At the time of the amalgamation there were 32 locals in good standing whose membership amounted to 1,906 which was composed of molder-hands, sawyers, turners and all kinds of competent machine wood workers. The efforts on the part of the founders of the new organization to avoid a conflict with existing unions proved futile. The line of cleavage separating the field claimed from that of the Furniture Workers and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters was not a natural one, and consequently the union soon found itself engaged in troublesome conflicts with these organizations. The

¹⁵ Distribution of locals by states: Indiana and Illinois, 8 each; Ohio 5, Minn. 4; Mich., N. Y., Mo., 3 each; Cal., Wis., 2 each; Neb., Colo., Texas, D. C., Pa., Ont., Tenn., Ia., Ark., 1 each.

¹⁶ *Constitution, 1890*, Art. XX, Sect. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Art. XX, Sect. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Art. XX, sect. 3.

existence of these conflicts hastened the amalgamation with the Furniture Workers' Union.

THE AMALGAMATED WOOD WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA

Prior to the time of the amalgamation there had been no successful effort to unite all the laborers in the wood working trades into one organization. Experience had shown that unions in a particular branch of the industry were ineffective on account of the energy wasted, either in endeavoring to maintain an organization in a field too limited to furnish room for a large, efficient union, or in strifes over jurisdictional troubles. Among the many attempts to establish unions in the different branches of the industry only the United Brotherhood of Carpenters', the International Furniture Workers', and the Machine Wood Workers' Unions are worthy of consideration.¹⁹ Of these the United Brotherhood was more particularly interested in the organization of the outside workmen than of the factory hands. The Furniture Workers' Union limited its field of jurisdiction to the workmen engaged in the manufacture of furniture, while the Machine Wood Workers endeavored to organize the factory hands employed on wood working machines. This division of the field does not correspond to any inherent division of the industry itself, but is the result of the development of organization in these particular branches of the industry.

The furniture workers had argued for a long time in favor of a strong centralized union. The reason why they had urged this policy more insistently than other wood workers was because they felt the pressure of the concentration of production to a very much greater degree than any other group of workmen. The carpenters had to deal, it is true, with large contractors, but the relative strength in bargaining power of the carpenters was greater than that of the furniture workers. This was true,

¹⁹ Besides these three unions there existed the United Piano Makers' Union, which was confined in the main to New York, and whose membership had been declining for some time. The Wood Carvers' Union had a membership of about 600. The Varnishers' National Union scarcely deserved the name, and the Upholsterers' Union was little known. M. M. W. Feb. 1894.

not only because the carpenters had a stronger and more effective organization, but also because the machine processes in the manufacture of furniture rendered the furniture workers particularly liable to the competition of unskilled workmen. The constant influx of foreigners and the incentive to employ women and children, endangered the wage-scale. For these reasons the furniture workers, by showing a common interest among all the different branches of the wood working industry, were endeavoring to bring about a centralized organization. This agitation was begun during the early years of the '80's, and was kept up until the amalgamation with the Machine Wood Workers in 1895. At the convention of the Furniture Workers at Allegheny City in 1884, attention was called to the need for concerted action among the workmen in the industry, and the first effective step was taken to accomplish this end, which was soon presented to the locals for their approval in the form of a mutual agreement with the United Order of American Carpenters and Joiners.²⁰ This alliance was nothing more than a mutual agreement to recognize cards of membership, thereby securing to members of each organization the right to work in any shop without being compelled to leave his own organization and join the other. A similar arrangement was effected between the International Furniture Workers' Union and the Cabinet and Piano Makers' National Union of Canada in 1890.²¹ A closer union than either of these was formed in New York in the latter part of 1885, when a number of organizations agreed to appoint from their local unions an executive committee to superintend their interests in their dealings with the employers. Definite

²⁰ The substance of this agreement was as follows:

1. Mutual recognition of membership cards, thereby enabling the members to work in the same shop without being compelled to leave their union.
2. In case a member leaves one union to join the other, he be required to pay all dues to date.
3. Recognition of working rules already adopted by either union.
4. Majority rule where members of both organizations are working together.
5. Provision for the adjustment of disputes between the unions, or for complaints of unfair treatment.

Cf. *Furniture Workers' Journal*, April 10, 1885. The terms accepted, *Ibid.*, December 4, 1885.

²¹ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Nov. 15, 1890, p. 1.

rules were adopted, governing their relations with each other, whereby the cards of each union were recognized by the other organizations.²²

But these alliances were little more than mutual agreements, and were in no sense the establishment of a central organization. The question of amalgamation and the need for concerted action gained favor among the leaders during the early years of the '90's. In May, 1894, Local No. 7 of New York, one of the strongest locals of the Furniture Workers' Union, sent to the Executive Committee of that organization, a proposition to amalgamate with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. Prior to this the question had been proposed locally by some of the carpenters, but no official recommendation had been made by them. During the summer months of 1894, the Furniture Workers' Journal kept the question constantly before the minds of the membership of that organization, and urged that the locals instruct their delegates to the next convention so that they would be prepared to take action on the subject. At the time the proposition was made, it is clear that no definite plan had been framed. If an organization was to be formed which was to include wood workers in all branches of the trade, it seemed desirable that the new organization should indicate that fact by its name. It was proposed that it be called *The International Union of Wood Workers and Kindred Trades*. There was more involved in this question than mere patriotic loyalty to a name. It was clear that the furniture workers would insist upon the admission to the new organization of all the locals affiliated with the International Furniture Workers' Union, including the upholsterers, varnishers, and gilders, whose work was kindred to, but not strictly speaking wood working. When the question was presented to the carpenters' convention in 1894, they voted it down, because such an amalgamation would cause endless difficulty on account of the widely varying character of

²² *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1886, p. 3. The organizations which entered into this agreement were Local No. 7 of the I. F. W. U., a trade association of Furniture Workers, the Custom Upholsterers' Union, the Furniture Machine Workers' Union No. 19, a Turners' Union, Carpenters' Union No. 4, and two Carvers' Unions.

the demands from the different branches.²³ The carpenters, however, sent a committee to the Ninth convention of the International Furniture Workers' Union, but the proposition which this committee presented was based upon the idea that only cabinet makers would be admitted, and these only by direct application for a charter and with the approval of the District Council of the Carpenters' Union having jurisdiction in the matter.²⁴ This was an impossible proposition from the furniture workers' point of view, and the question was voted down. But the convention passed a resolution, instructing the Executive Committee to confer, after the adjournment of the convention, with the General Executive Board of the United Brotherhood, and to ascertain if the carpenters were willing to hold a joint conference with the committees from the International Furniture Workers and the Machine Wood Workers for the purpose of finding a basis of amalgamation.²⁵

This conference was held January 13, 1895, in Philadelphia, in the offices of the United Brotherhood.²⁶ It was clear that the carpenters were unwilling to recede from the position taken by the Indianapolis convention against including all the locals affiliated with the International Furniture Workers' Union. When this became apparent the representatives of the Furniture Workers proposed the following formal agreement:

"The organizations herein named do hereby jointly and severally agree as follows:

Section 1. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Machine Wood Workers' International Union

²³ The carpenters felt that their wage-scale would be affected, and that the long hours and low wages in some branches of the trade would involve them in endless strikes.

²⁴ This committee was composed of Henry Frank, D. P. Rowland, and Henry Valorius. There was a misunderstanding as to the motive of union No. 7 in sending out a communication for amalgamation. The carpenters took it as an application for a charter and local No. 7 said it was only for information. *Proceedings, Ninth Convention*, p. 20.

²⁵ *Proceedings, Ninth Convention*, p. 20.

²⁶ *Proceedings, Ninth Convention*, pp. 21, 22.

The U. B. was represented by their five members of the Executive Board and the General Secretary, P. J. McGuire. The I. F. W. was represented by C. F. Gebelein and E. Kuppinger. *Wood Workers' Journal*, Feb. 2, 1895, p. 1.

and the International Furniture Workers' Union shall hereafter, in any city or town, where local unions of one or the other organizations exist, not admit to membership any one who does not properly and rightly belong to the particular calling of the members of the local union to which he applies for membership.

Section 2. In all cases where there exists a reasonable doubt as to where to place such a candidate, it shall be left to the latter to decide which he shall join. Temporary employment at one or the other branch shall not be deemed a reason for immediate transfer, but such transfer shall be obligatory, whenever such employment lasts six months or over. Members shall also be transferred upon request, providing such request is not actuated by unfair motives, such as evasion of control, payment of back dues, or assessments, or any other such reasons aiming to escape the obligations of membership.

Section 3. Whenever a candidate or member of any of the above organizations finds employment at a job controlled by any two of the above organizations, other than his own, he shall be bound to abide by all the rules and regulations of the controlling organizations, relating to hours, wages, etc., and no distinction shall be made, whether it be inside or outside work.

Section 4. In order to facilitate a proper control and the enforcement of the foregoing, all members of the aforesaid organizations shall be obliged, if called upon, to exhibit their working cards, or membership books to any walking delegate, or shop delegate, and to abide by all rules for the enforcement of the control of the wages paid, no matter by what organization such walking or shop delegate may be authorized.

Section 5. Whenever an organizer of any one of the unions comes to a place, the other shall assist him in his work to the best of his ability.

Section 6. Any member expelled by any one of the aforesaid organizations shall not be admitted by either of the

other two, unless there be an understanding with the one interested.

Section 7. Whenever members of any one organization are on strike, those belonging to the other two shall under no circumstances take their places or finish work left behind by the strikers. Members in good standing, however, shall be permitted to work in any shop or building, so long as they do not violate any of the foregoing rules.

Section 8. No material boycotted by one organization shall be handled by the other organizations."²⁷

This contract was declared by the conference to meet the necessary requirements, but the representatives of the carpenters refused to ratify it on account of the stand taken by their last convention, whereupon it was decided to submit the proposed agreement to the district counsels and local unions of the United Brotherhood.²⁸ However no positive results came from these negotiations.

Although proposition and counter proposition had been offered, little progress had been made toward framing a strong centralized union in the wood working industry by the negotiations which have just been reviewed. There was more immediate need for an amalgamation between the Machine Wood Workers and the Furniture Workers, than elsewhere, on account of the over-lapping jurisdiction of these two organizations. Both unions were organizing indoor workmen. The machine wood workers had amended their constitution at their convention in 1894, so as to admit to membership all wood workers, "from

²⁷ *Machine Wood Worker*, Feb. 1895, p. 1.

²⁸ The General Executive Board of the Carpenters and Joiners sent the following communication of their position to the General Secretary, P. J. McGuire: "The General Executive Board had decided that while they were individually disposed to accept the terms of the agreement, as presented by your committee, as the basis for a future agreement, still they are officially bound by instructions of the Indianapolis Convention * * * and must first consult the unions and districts interested before they can enter into any final agreement. For these reasons the Executive Board were compelled to defer definite and final action until the next quarterly meeting of the Board to be held next April. Meanwhile the General Secretary is instructed to consult the unions and districts directly interested, and have written statements from them to present to the next meeting of the General Executive Board." Cf. *Machine Wood Worker*, Feb. 1895, p. 1.

those who convert logs into lumber to those who send the finished product from the factory."²⁹ The result of this change in policy was to bring benchmen, varnishers, and carvers into the organization, and the admission of these men brought the union into conflict with the Furniture Workers. The Carpenters, while admitting machine wood workers, were primarily interested in the outside workmen, so that there was no special reasons for them to desire a closer agreement with the other organizations. It had not yet become evident to the carpenters that the control of the production of the building material would be an effective argument in their dealings with the contractor. Their standing aloof at this time prevented the formation of a close organization of all the wood working trades, but it left a field with fairly distinct boundaries, occupied by two organizations with overlapping jurisdictions, but with an inclination to come to a common agreement.

A representation of the Machine Wood Workers was present at the Ninth Convention of the International Furniture Workers' Union in the interest of a closer union with that organization.³⁰ This convention passed a resolution to serve as a basis for an agreement with the machine wood workers.³¹ A copy of

²⁹ *Machine Wood Worker*, May 1895, pp. 4, 5. The amendment was adopted at the convention in Oct. 1894.

³⁰ The representative of the machine wood workers at the Cincinnati Convention of the I. F. W. U. in 1894 was Fred Gloeckner, *Machine Wood Worker*, Oct. 1894, p. 1.

³¹ The resolution was as follows:

1. In localities where there is a machine wood workers' union, affiliated with the International Furniture Workers' union, the Machine Wood Workers shall refrain from organizing a union of their own, and in other localities, where there are machine workers belonging to a local of the International Furniture Workers' Union, the Machine Wood Workers shall organize a union only with the consent of such a local.

2. In localities where there exists a machine wood workers' union affiliated with the International Union, and where the Machine Wood Workers' Union has organized one also, the membership of such unions shall be transferred to the older union.

3. In localities where there is no machine wood workers' union affiliated with the International Furniture Workers' Union, the latter shall make no effort to organize one, but on the contrary, shall assist the Machine Wood Workers in the work of organization by every possible means.

4. The Ninth Convention of the I. F. W. U. recommends to the Convention of the M. W. W. U. to earnestly endeavor to effect an amalgamation with

this proposed agreement was sent for ratification to the convention of the Machine Wood Workers, which was held in St. Louis in October, 1895, and these negotiations served as the preliminary steps in the formation of a single organization. The proposition to amalgamate the two unions came from the International Furniture Workers' Union in the form of a communication from Mr. Gebelein, the general secretary of that union, to T. I. Kidd, stating that the Executive Council of the Furniture Workers favored amalgamation, and asked upon what terms the Machine Wood Workers were willing to amalgamate.³² As this proposition was in line with the action taken by the last convention of the Machine Wood Workers, the General Council immediately framed an answer indicating their willingness to consider the question. It was decided that the conditions of amalgamation should be submitted to the local unions of the two organizations for their approval. The following terms were then drafted and submitted to the locals, and they constituted the basis of the amalgamation of the two organizations:

"1. The declaration of principles of the International Furniture Workers' Union shall be adopted and the new organization shall be called 'The Amalgamated Wood-Workers' International Union of America.'

2. A conference of representatives of the two organizations shall be held at a centrally located place, and the terms adopted shall bind both organizations.

3. The declaration of principles, together with the laws governing mortuary, sick, and tool insurance, and such other parts of the constitution of the International Furniture Workers' Union as must necessarily be retained, together with the constitution of the Machine Wood Workers' International Union, except such part or parts as conflict with the propositions of the Furniture Workers' Union, shall be the general laws under which the amalgamated organization shall be guided until such a time as a convention of all the local unions shall take place.

the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and with the I. F. W. U. of America." Cf. *Proceedings, Ninth Convention*, p. 21.

³² *Machine Wood Worker*, May 1895, p. 7.

4. Other wood-working organizations that desire to affiliate with the new association shall be invited to send delegates to the conference.

5. These points shall constitute the basis upon which an amalgamation shall be wrought, and they shall be submitted to the local unions for their approval, after the Executive Councils of both organizations have duly considered them."³³

These terms were duly submitted and received the support of the local unions. The joint conference, composed of three representatives from each organization, completed the work of amalgamation at a meeting held in St. Louis November 11 and 12, 1895.³⁴ The representatives met and concurred in the approval by the general membership. They proceeded to elect officers for the ensuing year, and to decide a number of minor questions, such as the numbering of locals and the selection of a date for the amalgamation to become effective.³⁵ The question of benefits also received attention, and by unanimous consent of the conference, it was agreed that those furniture workers, who were in good standing should be immediately entitled to the same benefits as prescribed in their own constitution (sections 108 and 109). This completed the work of the conference and established for the first time a general union for workmen in all lines of the factory wood working industry. The following comment concerning the work of the conference appeared in the *International Wood Worker*:

"For the first time in the history of the labor movement in America, there is a general union of wood workers based upon scientific principles. The interests of all will

³³ *Ibid.*, June, 1895, p. 13.

³⁴ The furniture workers were represented by Charles F. Gebelein, Robert Krummer and Julius Strass; the Machine Wood Workers by John Green, Thomas I. Kidd and Joseph Sturtz. John Green was elected president, J. Van Dohn, first vice-president; William Love, second vice-president, and Thomas I. Kidd, general secretary. It was moved by Joseph Sturtz that the furniture workers be entitled to three representatives and the general council, to be chosen from their own membership, and that this be made a condition of amalgamation. They chose as their representatives Charles F. Gebelein, E. P. Burnam and Fred Kroie. Cf. *Ibid.*, December, 1895, p. 65.

³⁵ The date selected was January 1, 1896. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

be the same, and all will be governed by the same laws, contributing to the same common fund, co-operating with each other in framing the same laws and working together for the same end will develop a unity of purpose that will give all branches of the wood working industry an impetus that has been sadly lacking for many years. The Amalgamation is based upon strictly trade union principles, The machine men shall have the right to make their own special laws, scale of prices, and condition of employment without interference on the part of any of the branches. The same autonomy shall be guaranteed all other branches of the factory wood working industry.³⁶

At the time of the amalgamation the Furniture Workers' Union had 23 locals in good standing, and the Machine Wood Workers had 39. However, only 11 locals of furniture workers, and 32 of machine wood workers,—a total of 43—came into the new organization, the remaining locals either lapsed their membership or were consolidated with some other local union. These 43 locals were distributed among 15 states, ten of which were in Illinois, and seven in Michigan. The total membership of the new union was 2,504, of which 1,906 were machine wood workers, 634 were furniture workers. Over a third of the membership (876) was in Illinois, the two cities of Chicago and Rockford having over 30% of the membership. The strength of the union was confined to a few manufacturing centers, and no great activity in organization was manifested by the union until the latter part of 1898. The membership increased slightly, but the number of locals remained about stationary. In the early part of 1899 active work of organization was undertaken, and the number of locals rose from 68 in April, 1899, to 242 in November and December, 1903, the largest number of locals that were ever affiliated with the organization. These locals were distributed among 30 states, and were situated in 171 cities.³⁷ Since then the number of locals has gradually declined, until there were only 144 in October, 1905, and at the last convention there were 71 locals,

³⁶ *International Wood Worker*, Jan. 1896, p. 80.

³⁷ *International Wood Worker*, Nov. and Dec. 1903.

distributed among 24 states, and located in 50 cities. The membership increased from 2,247 at the time of the Detroit Convention to 9,948 at the time of the next convention.³⁸ The membership was still largely centered in Illinois, particularly in Chicago, where 32% of the membership was located.³⁹ The membership increased rapidly after 1900, as the following table indicates:

January 1, 1900.....	9,948	January 1, 1905.....	14,113
January 1, 1901.....	14,200	January 1, 1906.....	11,605
January 1, 1902.....	16,300	January 1, 1907.....	9,641
January 1, 1903.....	25,990 ⁴⁰	January 1, 1908.....	5,761
January 1, 1904.....	31,230	January 1, 1909.....	4,117

The rapid growth in membership during this period was due in a large measure to the special effort put forth to extend the organization. During the year 1901 a referendum vote ordered the levying of two assessments of 25 cents per member for the purpose of placing organizers in the field.⁴¹ The results of this policy were evident, as the union more than doubled its membership between January 1901 and January 1904, when the union enjoyed its most prosperous period. Since then the membership has fallen off continuously until there were only 4,117 in January 1909.⁴² The decline is the result of the fight with the Carpenters, which will be studied in a later chapter.

The constitution provides that ten capable workmen between the ages of 18 and 60, may organize a local and become affiliated with the Amalgamated Union. After a local has been established in order to become a member, the candidate must make written application which must be endorsed by some member of the organization, who is then in good standing.⁴³ Applications

³⁸ *Proceedings, Second Convention*, p. 12.

³⁹ Membership includes that of Oak Park, Pullman, Englewood and South Chicago.

⁴⁰ *Proceedings, Third Convention*, p. 31. *Proceedings, Fourth Convention*, p. 8.

⁴¹ The proposition to levy an assessment for organizing purposes originated in the General Council, and was referred to the membership. It was passed by the General Council, April 19, 1901, (*Journal*, Apr. 1901 p. 39.)

⁴² *Proceedings, Fourth Convention*, p. 8.

⁴³ *Constitution*, Revised 1904, Sect. 49, 60, 61. Form of Application for membership. (Cf. *Constitution*, Revised 1904, Sect. 61.)

"Desiring to become a member (or re-instated) in the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union of America, I hereby make application for membership (or reinstatement) therein with accompanying fee and voucher. Name

for membership are referred to a committee of two who investigate the character and qualifications of the candidate, and report their findings at the next regular meeting. The constitution provides that no candidate can be initiated into the union, until at least one week after his application has been made, but if the union thinks it advisable, and there is no objection raised, the candidate may be admitted at the same meeting that his application is received.⁴⁴ In case an objection is raised to a candidate his application is then referred to a special committee of three, who are required to investigate and report at the next meeting of the local, at which time the question is decided by majority vote of the members present. Whenever an application has been rejected, the union will not entertain another from the same individual within three months from the time that the first application was made.⁴⁵ All applications for membership must be accompanied by the full initiation fee,⁴⁶ and in case the candidate does not present himself for initiation within four weeks from the time of his election, he forfeits the initiation fee, unless he can show satisfactory cause for the delay.⁴⁷ Upon admission to the union the general secretary issues a membership book, which is duly numbered and registered in his office, and which enables him to keep an accurate record of the total membership of the union.⁴⁸ Provision is also made for those who are unable to become beneficial members, on account of age or state of health, to join the union as an honorary member. An honorary member is entitled to strike benefits, and with the exception of

of Applicant	Residence.....
Occupation	
Employed by	Age
Married	Place of Birth

I hereby declare that I am in sound health and am not subject to any chronic disease. I agree that if it should be hereafter found that I have made misstatements as to my health, or as to my qualifications for membership (or reinstatement), I shall be debarred from the benefits provided by this Amalgamated Union."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Sect. 60.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Sect. 64.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Sect. 67.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Sect. 65.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Sect. 24, 25.

death and disability benefits, he enjoys all the rights and privileges of the organization.⁴⁹

In order to enjoy the privileges of the union a member has certain duties which are incumbent upon him. The regulations in regard to these duties, which follow, were incorporated into the constitution of the Amalgamated Union almost bodily from the Machine Wood Workers' Union. Each member is required to pay his monthly dues regularly. In case a member allows his dues to remain unpaid for a period of three months, he stands suspended without further action by the local or the Amalgamated Union.⁵⁰ At the end of the second month, the financial secretary of the local union is required to notify such members, but failure to receive this notification does not prevent the suspension in case the dues remain unpaid at the end of the third month.⁵¹ This rule of suspension operates in the same manner for the failure to pay fines and assessments, except in the case of members who are sick or out of work, and have been excused from the payment of dues by a majority vote of their local union. Members, who have been suspended for this or any other cause, are not entitled to any benefits nor have they any claim upon the Amalgamated Union.⁵² Members who are out of work may remain in benefits by paying the per capita tax, but in case they are unable to do this, they are debarred from all benefits until they commence again to pay dues.⁵³ When a member is out of employment he must report at every regular meeting of his local, in order to be excused from the payment of dues, and in case he works any portion of the month, he must pay the regular dues from that month.⁵⁴ Whenever a member has been suspended for non-payment of dues, fines or assessments, he may be reinstated by vote of his local, provided full payment is made of all charges against him at the

⁴⁹ Honorary members pay 25 cents per month dues, 7 cents of which is paid to the General Union.

⁵⁰ *Constitution, A. W. W. I. U.* Revised 1904, Sect. 73. Cf. *Const. M. W. W. I. A.* 1890, Art. XIX, Sect. 2, 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Sect. 73. A charge of 10 cents is made for sending such notices.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Sect. 72.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Sect. 75.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Sect. 75.

time of his suspension, and in addition the regular initiation fee of the local union.⁵⁵ A member may be suspended either by the local or the general council for working against the interests of the organization, or for violating his obligations to the union. In cases of this kind a member can be reinstated only by a two-thirds vote of the members of the local present at any regular meeting or by a vote of the general council, together with the payment of such a fine as may be imposed upon him.⁵⁶

The local union grants a transference card to members desiring to move from one locality to another. A member desiring a clearance card may apply to the financial secretary of his local union, and if he is clear on the books of the union, the card will be granted to him upon the payment of at least one month's dues in advance and ten cents for the card.⁵⁷ Upon receiving a clearance card, the member is required to sign his name on the back of the card, and this, together with his membership book, entitles him to admission to any local within the jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Union.⁵⁷ Members receiving clearance cards, are required to deposit them with the nearest local before the expiration of the time for which the card was granted, provided there is a local within a reasonable distance from the place of work.⁵⁸ The local union admitting a member on a clearance card requires him to sign his name in the presence of the vice-president, and if this signature is identical with that on the back of the card, the member is admitted to the union, and must abide by the working rules of this local.⁵⁹ But in case a member does not deposit his clearance card with a local before the expiration of the time for which it was granted, he may have it renewed by applying to the financial secretary of the local granting the card.⁶⁰ The general secretary holds the local union,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Sect. 77. Cf. *Constitution*, M. W. W. I. U. 1890. Art. XI. Sect. 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Sect. 78. Cf. also *Constitution*, M. W. W. I. U. 1890, Art. XI, Sect. 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Sect. 80. No vote is necessary to issue a clearance card, unless the member is indebted to the local for fines and assessments. Cf. *Constitution*, M. W. W. I. U. 1890. Art. VII, 1-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Sect. 82.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Sect. 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Sect. 81, 85.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Sect. 81.

granting the clearance card, responsible for the per capita tax of the member until the card has expired.⁶¹

If a member desires to withdraw from the trade, he can obtain a withdrawal card from his local, provided he is clear on the books of the union, and by the payment of ten cents for the card.⁶² If he desires to remain as an honorary member, entitled to the death and disability benefits of the union, he can have his name enrolled upon the books of the general office for that purpose.⁶³ Should a member holding a withdrawal card return to the trade within a year from the time the card was granted, he is entitled to re-admission without the payment of any initiation fee, and after six months, he occupies the same position for benefits, as when the card was granted.⁶⁴ Should a member become an employer, a withdrawal card may be granted to him on the same terms as are provided for other members, and is readmitted on the same terms if he again resumes the trade as a journeyman.⁶⁵ This provision does not apply to stockholders in union co-operative shops, unless such stockholders take an active part in the management of the shop or factory. The holders of withdrawal cards are not entitled to any of the benefits of the union, and should any person holding a card violate the constitution, or antagonize the principles of trade unionism, his card may be revoked by the Amalgamated Union.⁶⁶

The largest percentage of the employees in the wood working trades are foreigners. Cabinet work, as has been shown, has been in the hands of German workmen since the middle of last century. It is estimated that 50% of the cabinet makers of the country at the present time are German, 25% native and the remaining 25% of all other nationalities. The machine wood workers are also mostly foreigners. There is a large number of Swedes and Norwegians in the furniture factories and they are regarded by the employers as among the most highly skilled

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Sect. 86.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Sect. 87.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Sect. 88.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Sect. 89. Cf. *Const. M. W. W. I. U.* 1890. Art. VIII, Section 1-3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Sect. 90.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Sect. 91, 92.

and reliable workmen. In Chicago the percentage of German, Bohemians and Poles is high and they are ranked by the employers in this order in regard to skill and efficiency. In Michigan, and particularly in Grand Rapids the employees are largely Hollanders and the union has had great difficulty in maintaining locals among these workmen. It has not met with the same difficulty among other nationalities. In Chicago the union has followed the practice of organizing the workmen along race lines and as a consequence there are a number of strictly Polish, Bohemian and German locals. The form of the organization and many of its policies may be traced to the influence of the early German Unions and particularly to those in the cabinet making trades.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION: ITS STRUCTURE

There is no feature of trade union experience more vital to the existence and strength of the union, or of more interest to the student of social questions, than the methods by which union policies are framed, and the way in which the laws and regulations governing a trade are enacted. In fact, the study of trade union methods and government throws considerable light upon the policy of the state in dealing with almost identical problems. However, there is one important distinction between the government of a union and the government of a state. Trade union government is more readily adapted to changed conditions, and is, therefore, more revolutionary, in the strict sense of that term. The legislators of a state are bound by constitutional provisions,—either written or in the form of precedents that are quite as effective—which the minority adhere to with great tenacity, and which are capable of amendment only with the greatest difficulty. The framers of union policies also find a check in constitutional limitations, but in the case of most unions, there are ample provisions for amending the constitution to conform to the needs of the organization. There are regularly a large number of constitutional changes made in these unions, which enable the union to change its policy completely within a short period of time,—whenever, in the opinion of the majority, a change of its problems calls for an alteration of its constitutional provisions. Thus, the constitutions of trade unions are much more elastic and flexible than the constitution of any state, and hence much more sensitive to a change in the sentiment of the membership of the union on any question affecting its interests.

The difference between union government and state government is not confined to the enactment of laws, but is to be found also in the administration of these laws. The executive officers of a state rely in last resort upon the force of the militia for the enforcement of the laws. Union officials have no such power upon which to rely. It is probably true that there have been instances when force has been used for this purpose, but such cases are not normal. There is no regularly organized force upon which union officials may rely for the enforcement of union regulations. In fact, such an institution would be impossible in our present organization of society, as the union would then come into conflict with the authority which properly belongs to the state. Consequently, union officials are dependent upon the will of the membership for the acceptance and enforcement of a policy to a much greater degree than state officials, so that when a given policy no longer satisfies the membership, it can and must be changed.

THE LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM

The laws of the organizations treated in this thesis, may be classified into two groups,—the general laws, or those that apply to the organization as a whole, and the local laws, those that apply to the local unions only. The general laws were enacted in one of two ways, either by a representative convention or by a referendum submitted by the general executive council. The general convention was held at stated intervals, and was composed of delegates from the locals on the basis of membership.¹

This basis of representation, though it underwent slight changes and differed somewhat in the different organizations, was essentially the same for all three unions.² In the Amalga-

¹ The Furniture Workers' Union held its convention biennially, the Machine Wood Workers' annually, but after the amalgamation the conventions were held triennially, which necessitated an extension of the referendum.

² The Furniture Workers changed the basis of representation at the eighth convention to one delegate for a membership of 100 and less; two between 100 and 200; three between 200 and 300 and one additional delegate for each additional 300 members. Cf. *Proceedings of 8th Convention*, p. 67. Cf. also *Const. of F. W. U. 1876*; also *Const. of 1883*, Art. 3. The basis of representation adopted by the Machine Wood Workers was one delegate for a membership

mated Union before any delegate can be seated in the convention, he must present credentials properly signed by the president and secretary, and bearing the seal of the local of which he is a member and as further proof of this fact, he must present his membership book to the committee on credentials.³ Under no circumstances can a member vote by proxy, but the delegates present may cast as many votes as their local is entitled to delegates. Furthermore, a delegate must have been in good standing in the local which he represents for twelve months immediately preceding the date set for the convention, except where the local has not been chartered so long as this, when the delegate must have been in good standing at least three-fourths of the time since the local was chartered. The method of procedure in the convention is in accord with the practices prevailing in other legislative assemblies. It has been found necessary to resort to the committee system so that any proposed measure is referred to the proper committee for report, and the recommendations of the committee are sustained or rejected in accordance with the wishes of the convention. All measures passed by the convention become the law of the organization.⁴ This does not hold true of amendments. Amendments may originate in the convention but they must be submitted to the locals for ratification, and if supported by two-thirds of the membership voting, they become a part of the law of the organization.⁵ The con-

less than 100; two for a membership between 200 and 300; three for a membership between 300 and 600 and so on in the same proportion. Cf. *Const.* of 1890. Art. II, sect. 2. The regulation in the Amalgamated Union is that locals having a membership of 100 or less are entitled to one delegate; those having between 100 and 200 are entitled to two delegates; and for each additional 300 members or major fraction thereof, a local is entitled to one additional delegate. Cf. *Const.*, Revised 1904, Sect. 6.

³ No local is entitled to representation in the convention of the Amalgamated Union, if it is more than one month in arrears for fines or taxes, or has been chartered less than two months prior to the time of holding the convention. Cf. *Const. Amal. W. W. U.* Revised 1904, Sect. 7.

⁴ *Proceedings, Third Ann. Conv.* p. 50-55.

⁵ This regulation was in the constitutions of both organizations prior to the formation of the Amalgamated Union. Amendments may now be originated in one of three ways: in the convention, be proposed by the General Council, or by a local and seconded by eight locals, but in all cases the amendment must be submitted for a referendum vote. The constitution provides that unless

vention is of importance to the organization in other ways than that of furnishing a means for enacting laws. The representatives from different sections of the country come together in the convention and discuss their common and peculiar interests, and agree upon a common policy. The personal contact and association of the representatives in this body tend to create a solidarity of interests among the leaders of the organization and thus weld together what might otherwise be conflicting elements.

The second method of enacting legislation is by means of the referendum, a plan that is quite generally in use among the trade unions of the country, and one which was employed by all three unions under discussion. The general executive officers may propose some measure and submit it to a vote of the entire membership. The *Journal* furnished the medium through which the need for the legislation was impressed on the membership. The vote is taken by the locals and the result is transmitted to the General Secretary. The votes are then canvassed, and if the proposition has been supported by two-thirds of the members voting, the measure becomes law.⁶ The infrequency of the conventions in the Amalgamated Union has led to an extension of the referendum as a means of legislation.

The experience of the trade unions of the country with the referendum should throw light upon the use of this method as a means of enacting state law. The problem of the union from an administrative point of view is not essentially different from that of the state. The voting membership of trade unions constitute a large element in the voting population of the state. The questions presented to the union members are usually those that are easily understood, and concern those subjects with which the average unionist is most familiar. It would seem that the referendum under these conditions would show its best results. The

a convention has been held during the year, biennially during the month of August, the locals may propose amendments which may be adopted in the regular way. *Const. Revised 1904*, sect. 174.

⁶ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.* Revised 1904, sect. 34. The regulation of the M. W. W. U. was that a proposition should receive two-thirds majority of the membership of the union. Cf. *Const. 1890*, Art. IV, sect. 6.

theory of the referendum also appeals particularly to the unionist because it is the nearest approach to democracy, which seems possible under our present organization of society. It gives to the individual a voice in the conduct and management of his organization, provided he exercises his prerogative, which does not exist at the present time in any state. Wherever the referendum has been extended to the election of officials, it enables the individual to express his choice without fear of consequence, and at the same time it lessens the opportunity of forming cliques, rings, or combinations, with the view of controlling the policy of the union for personal considerations, legitimate or illegitimate.⁷ This is especially true where the Australian ballot system has been adopted, and the secrecy of the ballot is maintained. Furthermore, the referendum is an expensive method of conducting the business of an organization. It will be shown that the election of officials in 1898 cost the Amalgamated Union only \$70, whereas the convention in 1900 cost \$2,910. It would seem then that the referendum was particularly well fitted for the management of union affairs.⁸ However, in practice the system has disappointed the leaders, because of the failure of the membership to exercise their prerogatives, and to defeat measures which were clearly for the best interests of the organization. In the latter part of 1900 the Amalgamated Union submitted a large number of important questions to the general membership. According to Secretary Kidd not more than one-eighth of the entire membership cast votes on these questions. There were only two or three unions that cast over 100 votes, although there were many of the locals which had a membership ranging from four to nine hundred members.⁹ But the most emphatic statement on this point appears just at the close of Secretary Kidd's administration, when he expresses his opinion of the ref-

⁷ The Referendum was first used by the I. W. W. in the election of officers in 1898. Cf. *Journal*, Nov. 1898, p. 53.

⁸ *Journal*, March, 1900, p. 27. Cf. p. 93, 116.

⁹ Kidd suggests the Cigar Makers' method of fining each member \$1.00 who does not vote. *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1900, p. 127.

erendum after fourteen years' experience as secretary of the Wood Workers' organization.¹⁰ He says:

"No fault can be found with the principles of the referendum, because all men should have a right to a voice and vote in the conduct and management of their organization. They ought to have a voice in the election of their officers. They ought, in fact, to have as much to say about the affairs in which they are interested, as any one else in the organization.

"But, after all, democracy in unionism is a hideous failure, and this applies with considerable force to at least 50 per cent of the advanced unions, including the Amalgamated Wood Workers.

"We send our delegates to conventions to frame laws for us. These delegates adopt proposed amendments by unanimous vote, but if these amendments are likely to take a solitary cent from the pockets of the members, the members defeat them. The same is true in connection with the election of officers. Members will abuse the officials to their heart's content, and at the same time manifest absolute indifference in electing competent successors . . .

"Democracy in unionism is a failure. This was never demonstrated to us more clearly than it is demonstrated in the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Union to-day. Certain propositions were approved by our second convention that would have meant much to our organization. Yet returns at present indicate that these much needed reforms will be defeated . . .

"As we are retiring from the executive office of the Amalgamated organization, we can say without fear of being charged either with mercenary motives or a desire to acquire additional powers, that from our experience the only organization that can succeed effectively is one where power and responsibility are centralized. Never before have we been so firm in the belief that the so-called one-man power is the best power after all. The organization, however, should never surrender its right to recall an official who fails in the performance of his duty. If power and responsibility are centralized on men who are hon-

¹⁰ Six as secretary of M. W. W. I. U. and eight of the A. W. W. I. U.

est, able, and conscientious, then the power and responsibility will be used for the common good of all."¹¹

In both the Furniture Workers', and the Machine Wood Workers' Union, the local served simply as an administrative unit on all general questions, thus furnishing the means of presenting questions of policy, and of testing the sentiment of the membership on problems affecting the union. In purely local affairs, such as shop-rules, by-laws, and the like, the local unions have the right to legislate, providing their actions are not in violation of the general constitution.¹² In the Amalgamated Union local legislation may be enacted either by the local union, or, in the larger wood working centers, by wood workers' councils. In cities and towns where two or more branches of the Amalgamated Union have been organized, there has naturally developed a need for harmony of policy and action, both in respect to trade relations with employers and in respect to questions of internal policy, such as the fixing of dues, assessments, and by-laws. In order to secure concerted action among the locals thus situated, the Amalgamated Wood Workers have developed a central labor body, occupying a sphere between the international organization and the local union, which they call the Wood Workers' Council. The first council of this kind was organized in Chicago during 1894, and was composed of delegates from each of the six locals then existing in the city.¹³ This council of the Machine Wood Workers did not continue in existence very long, but in December 1895, after the amalgamation with the Furniture Workers, steps were taken to reorganize the council and to place it on a new basis. There were then eight locals in Chicago, six of which were made up of machine wood workers and two were furniture workers. On January 10, 1896 a meeting was held by represen-

¹¹ *I. W. W.*, Oct. 1904, pp. 445-446. The referendum was repealed at the last convention, but before it becomes lawful it has to be ratified by a referendum vote. *Proceedings of Fourth Convention*, p. 46.

¹² At the second convention of the M. W. W. U. a regulation was enacted, requiring that all by-laws be submitted to the General Council for its approval. *Proceedings, Second Conv.* 1891, p. 2.

¹³ *Machine Wood Worker*, July 1894, p. 1; Oct. p. 1. W. J. Hunter of Local No. 7 was President and Fred Glockney of No. 9 was secretary of this organization.

tatives of the various unions, and established a wood workers' council. The council announced three distinct objects. First, the establishment of a labor bureau, the privileges of which were to be confined to members in good standing in the locals affiliated with the council.¹⁴ Second, the fixing of a minimum wage scale, to be effective throughout the jurisdiction of the council. The wages paid in Chicago at this time ranged from \$1 to \$3 per day, with frequent variations for the same grade of work. In order to introduce some uniformity in the wages paid for the same kind of work, the council determined to adopt a minimum wage scale for each branch of the trade.¹⁵ Third, in order to extend and strengthen the organization in the city, the council proposed to put organizers in the field, and as an additional element of strength, it proposed the introduction of the working card system.¹⁶ This council has continued in existence since the date of its reorganization and its success has led to the establishment of similar bodies in other working centers.¹⁷ As an administrative body, the Wood Workers' Council exists by the authority of a charter granted by the General Secretary.¹⁸ The council is required to pay to the General Secretary, a charter fee of two dollars, and dues to the amount of fifty cents semi-annually for each local union affiliated with it.¹⁹ The council holds regular meetings once a week, but special meetings may be called by the request of "four delegates from at least four local unions," but no meeting is lawful, unless all delegates have been duly notified at least twenty-four hours before the time of meeting.²⁰ Twelve delegates constitute a quorum for all regular and special meetings, provided they represent a majority of all the locals affiliated with the council. Each council has the authority to frame all trade rules, and make agreements with the employers,²¹

¹⁴ *Const. of A. W. W., Council of Chicago*, Sect. 4.

¹⁵ *I. W. W.*, March 1896, p. 103. It was assumed that the employer had the right to dismiss any employee, who was not worth the minimum wage.

¹⁶ *I. W. W.*, Jan. 1896, p. 80.

¹⁷ There has been as many as 12, and there are now 7 wood workers' councils.

¹⁸ *Cf. I. W. W.*, Aug. 1897, p. 14, for a copy of a charter for a wood workers' council.

¹⁹ *Const. W. W. C. of Chicago*, sect. 4-5.

²⁰ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Revised 1904, sect. 151.

²¹ Subject to the ratification by mass meetings of the employees. *Cf.* p. 144.

to found and supervise a labor bureau for its members, and to settle all disputes between local unions and their members.²² The council may also adopt whatever rules it may think necessary for the welfare of the locals affiliated with it, and to impose such fines on the unions and the membership connected with the council, as may be necessary for the enforcement of its laws and the maintenance of discipline. Non-compliance with any of these regulations by any local, except when the General Council has over-ruled, is regarded as sufficient cause for revocation of the local's charter.²³ So long then as the council legislates in accordance with the constitution of the Amalgamated Union, it is supported by the general officers in the enforcement of its regulations. Where a Wood Workers' Council does not exist, the locals have the authority that is vested in the council, but its by-laws must be submitted and approved in the same manner by the General Council. Hence it is clear that the central organization exercises a decided check upon the character of local legislation. The local can, however, exercise an indirect veto upon the General Council, through the right to amend the constitution.²⁴

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

In the treatment of the methods of legislation, it has been shown that from the first there were two divisions of the government—the international and the local union. Furthermore, it has been shown that with the development of the problems of the union, there has come into existence a division, occupying an intermediate place between the local and the international organization, namely, the Wood Workers' Council. When it comes to the administration of the laws, each division has its own set of administrative officials, each with its own separate functions.

In the old Furniture Workers' Union the administration of the laws was vested in two committees,—an Executive Committee, at first called a Control Commission, and a Board of Supervisors. These committees were chosen by the local union, or unions, of a

²² *Const. W. W. U. of Chicago*, sect. 16-17.

²³ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 153.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, sect. 40.

locality designated by the convention. The only limitation stipulated was that the two committees could not be situated in the same locality. The Executive Committee was composed of seven members, a corresponding secretary, a recording secretary, a treasurer, two trustees, and a press committee of two members.²⁵ Besides the regular duties of the different members, this committee had the supervision and direction of all agitation. They were authorized to spend \$50 per quarter for this purpose, and could exceed this amount with the approval of the Board of Supervisors.²⁶ The Executive Committee was required to report the financial condition of the union once a quarter, and, after the Journal was founded in 1883, these reports appeared regularly in its columns.

The Board of Supervisors was composed of five members, selected in the manner indicated above. The duties of this board were to a considerable extent judicial. They heard all complaints made by local unions against the Executive Committee, or complaints of one union against another. The Board had the right to suspend the entire Executive Committee, or any individual member for cause. This same authority extended to the action of the local unions, or to that of individual members of the same. In case of suspension, either of the entire executive committee or any individual member of the union, the parties affected had the right to appeal to a vote of the entire union.²⁷

In the Machine Wood Workers' Union the administration of the general laws was in the hands of the international officers—the general president, four vice-presidents, and the general secretary, together with a general executive council, composed of five members.²⁸ These officers except the general executive coun-

²⁵ The members of the Executive Committee gave bonds to the local union electing them for the faithful performance of their duties. The method of selecting officials was changed in 1890. Thereafter the meeting that chose the Executive committee designated the office for which each member was chosen, and the General Secretary might be chosen from any local affiliated with the I. F. W. U. Cf. *Proceedings of Eighth Convention*, pp. 68-69.

²⁶ This feature was adopted at the Third Convention. Cf. *Verhandlungen*, p. 13.

²⁷ *Const. I. F. W. U.*, 1883, Art. 10, 12.

²⁸ *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. III, sect. 1-5. The executive council held office until their successors were elected and had qualified. Cf. *Ibid.*, Art. sect. 1.

cil, were elected by the annual convention. In case of the council the members were chosen in the following manner: All locals within a radius of twenty miles of the general office met in joint session and elected five members of the union to act as a general executive council.²⁹ The constitution provided that the council should select its own chairman, and that it should meet once a month for the transaction of business. The duties of the council were varied. It was called upon to decide all questions not specifically provided for by the constitution; to hear and pass upon all grievances; to appoint a committee of two to audit and examine the books and vouchers of the general secretary at the end of each month; and to recommend new laws to the locals and "to transact such business as may come before it."³⁰

In the Amalgamated Union the officers of the international organization have the chief administrative duties.³¹ The officers of the Amalgamated Union consists of a general president, a general secretary, a general treasurer, and a general council.³² No member of the Amalgamated Union is eligible for a general office unless he has been a member continuously in good standing for two years immediately preceding his election. All general officers hold their positions for a term of two years. In case a general officer should accept a political nomination he is required to tender his resignation within ten days, and if he refuses the general council declares his position vacant.

The system of election is somewhat complicated. It is similar in many respects to the system used by the Cigar Makers. This method of election has arisen from the fact that the conventions are held at long intervals,³³ so that some method had to be devised for the election of officers other than by the representative conventions, if these officers are to be frequently held accountable by the general membership. By means of applying the ref-

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Art. 3, sect. 2. At the second annual convention it was recommended that the general officers should act as the executive council, but the proposition failed to pass at this time but later became law.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Art. IV, sect. 1.

³¹ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 163.

³² *Constitution, A. W. W. I. U.*, Revised 1904, sections 17-18.

³³ Constitution provides for a convention every three years, but a convention was not held from 1904 until March, 1909. *Ibid.*, sect. 5.

erendum to the nomination and election of officers an inexpensive method has been devised, even if it is somewhat awkward and unweildy. Biennially, during the month of July, each local union has the right to nominate one person for each of the general offices, and four for the general council, the delegates to the convention of the American Federation of Labor, and also the place for the location of the headquarters of the Amalgamated Union, which is voted on in the same manner as the general officers.³⁴ All nominations must reach the general office by August 5th, and the General Secretary then supplies the local unions with official ballots, on which is printed the name of each candidate. The election is held under the direction of the local union in accordance with constitutional provisions. Each local union is directed to appoint an election committee, and a polling place for every one hundred and fifty members or major fraction thereof. The committee is composed of three members, one appointed by the local president, one by the vice-president, and one by the financial secretary. This committee has full charge of the election, and it is their duty to see that no member deposits more than one ballot, as voting by proxy is not allowed under any circumstances. The general council is empowered to adopt whatever methods are necessary for insuring an honest election.

The voting takes place during the week commencing the first Monday in September, and the polls are required to be kept open from seven-thirty until ten P. M. The recording secretary is required to notify all the members of the time and place of holding the election. After the polls have been closed the election committee, together with the president and secretary of the union, shall sign the list of voting members and certify that no member has cast more than one ballot. The ballots and the list of voting members are then placed in an envelope, and in the presence of a majority of the election committee, it is mailed to the general secretary. This envelope is then held unopened until

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sections 36-48. The names of all candidates and the locals nominating them are published in the August issue of the *International Wood Worker*. The system has been frequently modified, especially in the direction of requiring the nomination to be made earlier in the year so that if a second vote is necessary, it can be taken before the close of the year.

the canvassing board meets to count the votes. The general president authorizes three locals, situated within a convenient distance from the general office to select one member each to constitute a canvassing board. This board meets in the office of the general secretary on the second Monday of October to canvass the vote. No returns are received after the board has convened. The vote is compiled and a report prepared for publication in the *International Wood Worker*. A clear majority of all votes cast is necessary for election, and if there be no election on first ballot, all but the two candidates polling the highest vote for each office are dropped, and another vote is taken on the remaining candidates. This ballot must be taken so that the election will be definitely settled by the fifteenth of December.

The system is relatively inexpensive. In his report to the Grand Rapids Convention, General Secretary Kidd stated that the total expense of the election of officers in 1898, including postage, express charges, and printing, was only \$70. But it has two serious defects. First, there is a decided tendency for each local to nominate some ambitious member from its own membership. This can be shown by the following table, compiled from the election of 1904:

Office.	Total candidates for each office.	Nominated by one local only.	Nominated by candidate's local only.
General President.....	9	6	4
General Secretary.....	10	6	2
General Treasurer.....	17	13	7
General Council.....	47 (4 to be elected)	32	35
A. F. L.....	61 (4 to be elected)	45	23

It will be seen that of the nine candidates for the office of general president, six received the nomination from but one local and four of these were supported only by their own locals; thirteen out of the seventeen for the general treasurer were nominated by only one local and seven of the thirteen were supported only by their own local. Such a method, while it gives the rank and file of the membership a chance to express their desires, results in a considerable amount of aimless balloting.

⁵⁵ One local nominated four of its own members, three nominated two each.

But if the system is to be tested by the character of the men selected, there can be little criticism, for the union has been, from the first, in the hands of conservative and fair-minded labor leaders, with no marked disposition toward rotation in office. In the second place, only a small proportion of the membership participate in the election. In the election of 1902 the canvassing board reported only 5199 votes cast, not counting the ballots that were mutilated, and those from unions which had not complied with the law.³⁶ The membership of the union at the time of the election was estimated at 20,000,³⁷ so that after making a very liberal allowance for the ballots thrown out, it is safe to assert that considerably less than half the membership voted at this election. In his report to the convention in 1900, Mr. Kidd complains of the failure of the membership to take part in the general elections, and advocated the adoption of some method to compel the rank and file to vote.

The general president is not, as might be supposed, the chief executive of the organization, but shares this function with the general secretary. The general president presides over the conventions of the Amalgamated Union, and has a voice in its proceedings, but is not permitted to vote except in case of a tie. He conducts all appeals against the decisions of the general secretary, is ex-officio member of the general council,³⁸ and the constitution stipulates that he shall use "the best of his ability to further the interests of the organization,"³⁹ which in practice is interpreted to mean assistance to the general secretary in the publication of the journal and in organizing the industry when not otherwise employed. In case of strikes he is frequently a member of the strike committee. However, the general president is not a mere figure-head, even though the power which he can constitutionally exercise is very limited. Since the policy of the union is determined in a large degree in the general council, as a member of this body, he can and does exert a very definite influence in framing that policy.

³⁶ *International Wood Worker*, Nov. 1902, p. 129.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Nov. 1902, pp. 126-127 and 129. The same results may be shown from other elections.

³⁸ *Constitution, A. W. W. I. U.* Revised 1904, section 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, section 19.

The most important official of the union is the general secretary.⁴⁰ He, in fact, is the real executive officer of the organization, although his duties are quite as much judicial and legislative as executive. All applications for charters are passed upon by him, and, if the local organization applying has fulfilled the constitutional requirements, the general secretary grants the charter. Benefit claims also, which were formerly passed upon by the general council, are now acted on by the general secretary and come before the general council only in case of appeal from his decision. Records of the proceedings of the conventions and the transactions of the council are kept by him. Also all money received by the Amalgamated Union is paid to him, for which he is required to keep an accurate account, issuing a quarterly report of all receipts and expenditures. This report is carefully audited by a committee appointed by the general council. In his quarterly report he is required to give statistical information relative to the state of trade, the rate of wages, and the hours of labor in the various wood working centers. The report must also contain statistics of strikes and lockouts during the preceding quarter, indicating the cost and the number of men involved. The January report must give the exact membership of each local union, the number of charters granted, and the number surrendered during the preceding year, together with the gain and losses of membership.⁴¹ A copy of this report must be furnished each local union.

The general secretary is ex-officio member of the general council, and he has a voice also in the proceedings of the conventions. In these two bodies he can exert a large influence upon the legislation and the general policy of the organization, and while he is required to refrain from active part in local work, he has the general supervision of the work of organization. The constitution provides that the general secretary shall issue monthly to all members of the Amalgamated Union an official journal, to

⁴⁰ *Constitution, A. W. W. I. U.* Revised 1904, sect. 20-30.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, sect. 22.

be known as the "International Wood Worker."⁴² This journal is to be managed in accordance with trade union principles, and is the medium through which the general membership is kept informed of the transactions of the general council, as well as all matters pertaining to the Amalgamated Union. The general secretary is required to give bond satisfactory to the general council for the faithful performance of his duties. He is held accountable in two ways; his actions are subject to revision by the general council, and at the biennial elections, his administration is passed upon by the general membership. The general secretary receives a regular monthly salary, fixed by the convention.

The general treasurer is the custodian of the funds of the union. His books must at all times be open for examination, and he must be prepared at any time to give a correct report of the receipts and expenditures. At no time can the cash in the treasurer's hands exceed \$50, and all money in excess of this sum must be deposited by the general secretary and general treasurer in their names and the name of the Amalgamated Union in some secure institution.⁴³ The treasurer receives all money from the general secretary, to whom it is paid, and he is not permitted to pay out money except by a written order from the general secretary. The general treasurer is required to furnish bond to the same amount as the general secretary. By virtue of his position in the general council, the treasurer has important influence in framing the policy of the union.

The general council is the chief administrative body of the organization. It is composed of seven members,—the three general officers and four elective officers.⁴⁴ One member of the general council must reside in the city where the general office is situated. With the exception of the general secretary and one other member no two members of the general council can be

⁴² The Furniture Workers published a journal entitled The International Furniture Worker. The machine wood workers published The Machine Wood Worker.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, sect. 31.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Sect. 17.

residents of the same state or province. The functions of the council are varied. In the first place it performs the duties of a supreme court, hearing the appeals, both from the decisions of the local union and from those of the general secretary. In this way the council becomes a check upon the general secretary, even though he is a member of the body which passes upon his actions. The decisions of the council are governed in all cases by the constitution, whenever there are regulations covering the question involved. Otherwise the case has to be decided upon its merits in accordance with equity. Then, the council has a large legislative power. An amendment to the constitution may originate in the council, and if supported by a two-thirds majority of all members voting by a referendum, the amendment is adopted. Furthermore, the council may decide whether it is necessary to levy a special assessment, which is really a legislative act. At times the council is called upon to exert executive powers, as for example, whenever local unions desire to inaugurate a strike, the grievance must be submitted to the council for its approval. Should any question of policy or of administration arise, which was not covered by constitutional provisions, it would be within the authority of the council to act upon such questions as it saw fit.

In the administration of its policy the membership of the union has shown its wisdom by electing and retaining in office men experienced in trade union affairs, thus giving to the organization the benefit of a continuous policy. The general president, John Green, held office from the date of founding the organization until the first convention of the Amalgamated Union (Oct. 1896). Upon his resignation, D. D. Muleahy was elected to succeed him and with the exception of one year Mr. Muleahy has been continued in that office to the present time.⁴⁵ T. I. Kidd was elected general secretary by the first convention of the Machine Wood Workers in 1890, and he was retained in this position until his resignation in 1904. He was succeeded

⁴⁵ In the election in 1898 Mr. E. E. Lord was chosen on second ballot, serving only one year.

by John G. Meiler, who has been continued in that office from January, 1905, to the present time.⁴⁶ This practice of long tenure in office resulted in a continuity of policy which has added to the strength of the organization.

As an administrative unit the local union has been essentially the same throughout the history of the three organizations considered and has been the principal medium through which the laws and regulations of the international union have been enforced upon the membership and through which also the general membership have exerted their influence upon the policies of the international organization. The international union comes into direct contact with the general membership in two ways, first by requiring the registration of each member in the central office and by granting from this office the membership book of the union. In the second place, whenever a local surrenders its charter, if there are any who desire to retain their membership in the organization, it is the duty of the recording secretary to notify the general secretary of this fact, forwarding to him a list of such members. Cards of membership are granted to them by the general secretary, and they are known as isolated members.⁴⁷ In all other matters the local is the medium of

⁴⁶ Perhaps no trade union has owed its existence to the influence of one man as the M. W. W. has to T. I. Kidd. He was the prime mover in the agitation which resulted in the formation of the union, and it was in a large measure through his persistent and able management of the affairs of the union that the M. W. W. became a recognized force in the wood working trades. He became known as a staunch friend of the laborers and as a fighter for the welfare of the union. His ability was recognized, not alone in his own union but also as an official of the A. F. of L. (He served for 5 years as an officer of the A. F. of L.) He was furthermore recognized by all students of the trade union problems as a capable leader in the trade union movement. He came to be respected by the employes, and finally was offered and accepted a position in the labor department of the firm (Brunswick, Balke & Collender) against whom he had waged more than one successful strike.

⁴⁷ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, sect. 93-95. This provision applies only to those members who are more than five miles from a local, and the card of membership is in reality a clearance card granted by the General Secretary, which must be deposited in case the holder finds work within five miles from any local. These members pay their dues and per capita taxes direct to the general office and in every other respect they are members in good standing, entitled to all the benefits and privileges of the organization.

communication between the international and the general membership. The local comes into existence by means of a charter, which is granted by the general secretary in accordance with definite constitutional regulations. A local cannot legally withdraw from the Amalgamated Union, if there are seven members of the local that object to such action, and no local can legally withdraw unless at least three months' notice of this intention has been given to the Amalgamated Union.⁴⁸ Since the formation of the Amalgamated Union the locals have been composed of employees in mills, furniture factories, car shops, wooden ware manufactories, and all indoor wood workers, except stair builders and mill wrights.⁴⁹

The local unions have a full corps of officials who have charge of the details of local administration. The constitution of the Amalgamated Union stipulates two qualifications for office, namely, a member must be over twenty-one years of age, and no member can be nominated for office, who is not present at the time of his nomination, unless he is absent on business of the union.⁵⁰ With the exception of a conductor and a warden, who are appointed at each meeting, all local officers are chosen by a secret ballot and a majority of the votes cast is sufficient for election.⁵¹ The term of office, except in the case of the trustees, those elected to fill a vacancy or officers of newly formed locals, is for one year. The trustees are elected so that one shall retire at each semi-annual election.⁵² The duties of the various officers are similar to those of the same officers in the Amalga-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, sect. 164.

⁴⁹ This was the jurisdiction allowed by the Downey Decision. Cf. p. 205-7. At the last convention the jurisdiction was extended to "all skilled persons employed in the wood working industry." Cf. *Proceedings Fourth Conv.*, p. 47. The regulation now is that when ten or more men, between the ages of 18 and 60 years, who are of good health and of good moral character, able to command the average wage make application to the General Secretary, a charter will be granted, provided that no objections made by any branch of the Amalgamated Union in the district from which the application has been received, are sustained by the General Council.

⁵⁰ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, sect. 103, 106.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sect. 102.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sect. 104, 105.

mated Union. In many respects the financial secretary is the most important local official, as a major portion of the executive work of the union,—such as receiving funds, signing warrants on the treasurer, keeping accounts between the local and its membership, granting clearance and withdrawal cards, and the like,—is conducted by this officer. All funds collected by the financial secretary are turned over to the treasurer, who pays claims against the local only on warrants signed by the president and financial secretary. The trustees,—who have general supervision of the property of the local,—may designate the bank in which the funds of the local may be kept. They are also required to audit the books of the officers once a quarter and report the results to the local union. The leaders of the organization usually get their first training as local officers.⁵³

In the administration of the business of the local union there are many questions which cannot be handled directly by the local. Often-times the membership runs up into the hundreds, and the men are employed in a number of different factories. Questions naturally arise concerning shop conditions in a single plant, which affect only the members employed in that plant, and which require direct and immediate attention. Such questions cannot be brought before a regular meeting of the local union. For the transaction of such business most labor organizations have adopted the shop steward system. Usually the local appoints a shop steward who is authorized to call and preside over the shop meetings, where all business pertaining to that particular shop may be transacted. For the purpose of illustrating the working of the system, the rules and regulations adopted by the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Council of Chicago, and in force in Cook County, may be taken as typical of the system developed by the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Union. These rules are formulated by the Wood Workers' Council, and then submitted to the general council for approval. They provide for the appointment of a shop steward by the

⁵³ *Constitution*, Revised 1904, sections 107, 109, 110, 112, 113, 116, 118, 119.

business agent of the council,⁵⁴ whose term of service is at least six months; but should he be discharged or quit work in that time, he is required to report to the business agent with all supplies and documents in his possession.⁵⁵ The shop steward is required to call a meeting of the employee of his shop at least once a month, when all business of the shop is transacted.⁵⁶ Attendance at the shop meeting is compulsory. If a member fails to attend a regularly called meeting, after he has been notified, without satisfactory excuse, he is subject to such fine as the shop meeting may impose. In case the member refuses to pay the secretary of the shop meeting the fine against him, the matter is referred to the secretary of the council, who notifies the union to which the member belongs to collect the fine, and no working card will be issued to the member until the fine is paid.⁵⁷ The shop steward must see that all members in the shop are in possession of the quarterly working card, and when a new man is hired, he must approach him and explain the benefits and privileges of membership with the union and invite him to join. In case he refuses to sign an application for membership within twenty-four hours, the matter is at once reported to the business agent of the council. If a closed-shop agreement exists between the employer and the organization the matter will be brought to the employer's attention by the shop steward, though the shop steward is not permitted to adjust any disputes, unless in exceptional cases, without first consulting the business agent or the council. If an adjustment cannot be reached the shop steward reports to the business agent, who then investigates and attempts to settle the difference.⁵⁸

The shop steward is the medium through which many other matters of interest to the union are transacted. He collects the

⁵⁴ *Constitution of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Council*, of Chicago, 1904, section 1. The Furniture Workers did not develop a shop steward system, but the system which was operated by the M. W. W. was adopted almost bodily by the Amalgamated Union. Cf. *Const. M. W. W.* 1890, Art. XXIV, sect. 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Section 4, 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Section 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Section 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, page 18, rule 2.

statistics of the members employed in his shop in the various branches of the industry, and reports this information to the Wood Workers' Council not later than the second week of each month.⁵⁹ He reports all unsafe machinery operated in his shop to the business agent, and in case of an accident he notifies the business agent or the secretary of the council, and instructs the injured workman to make no statement except to officers of the council. The labels and label transfer stamps are kept in his possession, and he is responsible for their use. He is required to see that no material is labeled except that made under union conditions. Thus it appears that the shop steward system is a necessary device for carrying out effectively union principles. Without some such system it would be impossible for the union to put into operation the principles for which it stands.

In those cities in which a wood working council has been established, the administration of local laws is in a large measure transferred to the officers of this organization.⁶⁰ A wood workers' council has the usual corps of officials—president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and board of trustees,—whose duties correspond in all essential details with those already described. In addition to the above-named officers, the position of business agent should receive some consideration. While the business agent is not an official of the organization, it frequently happens that he exercises more power and has a greater influence on the affairs of the organization than any officer.⁶¹ The business agents, with the exception of the secretary, are appointed by the council. A member must have belonged to the union at least three years prior to his nomination to be eligible for appointment as a business agent. The business agents, if not delegates, are ex-officio members of the council, in which case they have a voice, but no vote in the proceedings of this body. The function of the business agent is to have general supervision of all work within the jurisdiction of the council.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, page 18, rule 5.

⁶⁰ The Chicago Wood Workers' Council is taken as a type.

⁶¹ *Constitution of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Council of Chicago*, sect 14.

It is his duty to have union men employed in all shops, if possible, and in case of disputes, he shall endeavor to settle the difficulty to the best interest of the council.⁶² He relies upon the shop steward for facts as to the standing of the factory. The council may direct the business agent to collect initiation fees, but he is required to give receipts for such sums and turn over all funds collected by him to the secretary at each regular meeting. The council may appoint as many business agents as are necessary for the proper supervision of the affairs of the council. They are required to meet three times per week to consult as to the best methods of procedure, and to file with the secretary daily reports of the conditions of labor in the various shops. The business agent may prefer charges against any member found guilty of violating the rules of the council. He must always be prepared to respond to a call for a business agent, and perform such duties as the council may direct. The council may at any time dismiss a business agent on proven charges of incompetency, intemperance, or negligence of duties.

THE TRIAL SYSTEM

In the administration of the affairs of a union many questions arise which involve the constitutionality of a given policy or action. The attempts to solve this question has led to the development of a judicial system which is one of the most significant developments in the government of trade unions. This system is known in the Amalgamated Union as the "Trial System" and was adopted from the Machine Wood Workers' Union. Wherever a wood workers' council has been established, the question of the violation of union rules comes directly within the authority of the council. In fact, one of the objects of the council is "to settle all disputes between local unions and their members."⁶³ For this purpose the council appoints a trial commit-

⁶² In serious difficulties the matter may be taken up by the General Secretary. Cf. page 168 ff.

⁶³ *Const. Chic. W. W. C.*, sect. 4, 30-39. Cf. also *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. XII, sect. 1-3. Also *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, sect. 90-101.

tee of five members, no two of whom may be from the same local. It is the duty of the trial committee to gather evidence, which is then reported to the council, where it is decided by a majority vote. All charges against a member must be presented in writing with a full explanation of the charges, giving the names of the prosecutor and the defendant, as well as the witnesses.⁶⁴ The committee has the authority to call for whatever evidence it may require, and in case an accused member refuses to appear before the committee without reasonable excuse, he may be fined by the committee as it thinks proper. The accused member is given the right to plead guilty before any other evidence is taken, or he may remain to defend himself against prosecution and, if he chooses, he may employ some member of the union to assist him in the defense. The case is then decided by the council as indicated above. Where a council does not exist, the trial committee reports to the local and the case is then decided by a majority vote of the local. In case of fine the secretary of the council notifies the union of which the accused is a member, that a fine has been placed against the accused party and this fine must be paid the same as dues.⁶⁵ The accused member may take an appeal from the decision of the local or the wood workers' council, to the general council in which case he must give security to cover the fine or no working card will be granted to him.⁶⁶ Should any financial secretary violate this regulation he may be brought before the trial committee and punished as it sees fit. In extreme cases an accused may appeal to the general representative convention for a justification of his action but this is the final resort and he must abide by its decision or failing to do so, be suspended from the union.

This completes the treatment of the internal structure of the

⁶⁴ Witnesses for the prosecution summoned by the council, are given 25c carfare. The members of the committee receive \$1.50 for each meeting of the committee. Cf. *Rules of A. W. W. C. of Chic.* sect. 38.

⁶⁵ Any member who works for less than the official scale shall be fined \$10 for the first offense, \$25 for the second, and \$100 for the third. Cf. *Const. A. W. W. C. of Chic.*, p. 13. Members are not permitted to work on buildings, and if they do, they are subject to a fine of \$5 for the first offense. *Ibid.* p. 13.

⁶⁶ The general council hears also all appeals from the decisions of the general secretary.

organization, but the union has certain external relations, the social significance of which cannot be passed over without a brief examination. In the first place the Wood Workers are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. In the meeting of this body its representatives take part in framing the policy of that organization on questions in which all the laborers of the country have common interests. The Wood Workers have had occasion to appeal to the American Federation in their jurisdictional disputes with the carpenters.⁶⁷ But the principal importance of this relation is to bring the union into touch with the national labor movement. In the second place, in the larger cities the Wood Workers are usually affiliated with central labor organizations, as for instance, the Chicago Federation of labor. Here the delegates meet and pass upon the larger local questions which affect all the laborers of the city. Questions of national interest come before these bodies also, and the expression of opinion may take the form of resolutions indicating the attitude of the organization, but the influence of such bodies is more direct and potent on local questions. Lastly, in Chicago the Wood Workers are members of the Building Material Trades Council. The need for this organization arises from two causes, concentration of production on the one side, and extreme division of labor on the other. There has been a constant extension of centralized management without a corresponding extension of centralized control of the employees. This has led in many cases to the following situation, namely, that in one shop there will be workmen belonging to a number of different unions. The agreements may expire at different times, and, because the processes may be so nearly alike, the employer can play one group of workmen against another. The Building Material Trades Council has undertaken to handle this situation. It recognizes that the workmen in the shop have certain shop interests which can best be handled by increasing the strength of each union in making its agreements. If the agreements of all unions expire at the same time, and the various unions agree to work for a

⁶⁷ Cf. p. 200-221.

common end, the strength of each union is greatly increased. The Building Material Trades Council then is simply a device for meeting a condition which has been created by changed methods of production.

CHAPTER V

THE FINANCIAL AND BENEFIT SYSTEMS

The subject of the finances of the organization may be divided into the revenues of the international, those of the wood workers' council and those of the local union. There are four regular sources of revenue, the per capita tax, the sale of supplies, advertisements and subscriptions to the journal, and a group called in the secretary's report, "other sources." Besides these regular sources of income, there is always an important item in special assessments. Whenever the funds of the Amalgamated Union run low and a deficit is likely to occur, the general council has authority to draw on the locals for a sum not to exceed ten cents per member.¹ If the treasury becomes exhausted on account of a strike, the general council has the authority to levy on all members not affected by the strike, a special monthly assessment of twenty-five cents.

In the old Furniture Workers' Union the locals had the right to regulate the dues but they were required to pay to the Executive Committee a weekly due of 10c per member.² From this sum a reserve fund of 10c per month per member was set aside to be used in case of strikes. Half of the reserve fund was kept on deposit with the treasury of the local union, but it was at the disposal of the Executive Committee alone, so that the local had to keep it separate from all other moneys in its possession. Each local was further required to contribute 10c per month per member for agitation purposes and for the support of the jour-

¹ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 57.

² A charter fee was charged after 1890. An initiation fee of \$1.00 and an increase of the monthly dues to 50c was made at the same time. Cf. *Const. F. W. I. U.*, 1891.

nal, and in return for which the journal was sent free to every member of the organization. Finally each local was required to contribute 5c per member every three months to constitute a convention fund from which the traveling expenses of the delegates were defrayed.³ All moneys paid to the union were received by the corresponding secretary, who was required to keep an accurate account of the financial standing of the locals with the national organization. He was required to draw up quarterly financial reports, which were subject to revision and audit by the trustees, who had the authority to examine the financial books of the union at any time. The money received by the corresponding secretary was turned over to the treasurer, who kept a record of all receipts and expenditures of the union and reported the same at each meeting of the executive committee. The cash on hand could never exceed \$50, the excess being deposited by the trustees in some place of safe keeping designated by the executive committee. The treasurer was not permitted to pay out any money except on the written order of the recording secretary, and endorsed by the trustees. The funds of the Furniture Workers' Union were as effectively safe-guarded as regulations can establish safety. The most serious defect in the financial system of the union was one that was common to all organizations of that date, namely, the dues were so low and the income so small that it was impossible to build up a strong organization able to endure a long financial strain⁴.

The revenue of the Machine Wood Workers was derived from charter fees, the per capita tax,—including the dues from isolated members,—and special assessments.⁵ The revenue from the first two sources was to be used as a fund for the support of the union and for the payment of the benefits prescribed by the constitution.⁶ At the second convention a general strike fund

³ This provision was enacted at the second convention in 1874. Cf. *Verhandlungen*, p. 18.

⁴ Facts for the I. F. W. U. have been taken from the constitution of 1883.

⁵ Every local was required to pay a fee of \$10 for a charter and an outfit. Cf. *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. V, sect. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Art. VI, sect. 1, 3.

was established and the general council was empowered to levy on all locals not affected by the strike, a monthly assessment not to exceed 10c per member, whenever any deficiency should occur in the fund. This assessment was in force as long as the dispute was continued and the locals were required to pay it within two weeks from the date of notification. In case a local should fail to pay any of the taxes or special assessments for a period of three months, the general secretary was authorized to suspend the local from benefits.⁷

The sources of revenue of the Amalgamated Union have already been stated. The per capita tax is the most important source of revenue. Between October 1, 1896, and December, 1903, this tax constituted approximately 75% of the total revenue. It is a uniform tax of 20 cents for all members in good standing and is paid by an order on the treasury to the general secretary.⁸ The per capita tax is paid into a general fund for the management of the organization and for the payment of the benefits provided by the constitution. All money due the Amalgamated Union is paid to the general secretary, who turns the funds over to the general treasurer. In this way there is established a double check on the finances of the union. The same method of management is followed also in the local organization, where the financial secretary collects all money due the local, and pays it over to the treasurer, who acts simply as custodian of the funds. The object of this system is to give the membership a better opportunity for detecting any crooked work on the part of the officials. The union has made no attempt to establish a large fund. The general officers have had great difficulty in impressing upon the membership the need of high dues in order to put the union on a strong financial basis. It was not until 1902 that the minimum local dues were raised to 50

⁷ *Ibid.*, Art. VI, sect. 1, 3. On the last meeting night of each month the president and financial secretary of the local were required to sign an order on the local treasury for the amount of the per capita tax, and the treasurer must pay the tax to the general secretary without delay.

⁸ Has been increased to 30c at last convention. This will require ratification by membership before it becomes lawful. *Proceedings Fourth Convention*, p. 57-64.

cents per month.⁹ After 1897 there was a decided movement to increase the dues and initiation fees of the local unions throughout the country. In Chicago the agitation resulted in the establishment of uniform initiation fee of \$5 for Cook County,¹⁰ and this was raised to \$10 two years later.¹¹ The same effort was put forth elsewhere with similar results, as in Minneapolis in January, 1900, when the initiation fee was increased from \$5 to \$10.¹² While there was a decided resistance to an increase in the dues, there was a strong desire for high benefits. This attitude is probably due to the large German element among the membership, who brought with them from the International Furniture Worker's Union a strong sentiment in favor of high benefits. The futility of this policy was evident to the leaders,¹³ and often embarrassed the treasury, rendering it impossible for the general officers to enforce the decrees of the union in regard to the payment of strike benefits.

⁹ *Constitution*, 1902, sect. 49. Have been increased to 75c per month. Cf. *Proceedings Fourth Convention*, p. 56.

¹⁰ *I. W. W.*, Jan. 1897, p. 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, June 1899, p. 64.

¹² *Ibid.*, Nov. 1899, p. 122.

¹³ The following is the substance of an article entitled "High Dues Mean Success," and it expresses the attitude of the officials toward this question. The Amalgamated Wood Workers have had recently about fourteen disputes on at one time. In every instance demands were made upon headquarters for financial assistance. In our industry strikes usually involve larger numbers of men than are involved in strikes in other industries. All the more reason why we should have a strong fund with which to fight and win our battles. It was impossible to grant all of our unions on strike financial assistance. . . . The Wood Workers must learn that "out of nothing, nothing can come," and if they achieve success they must follow in the footsteps of others, and do as others have done who have succeeded. One trouble with the average workingman is in his belief that as soon as he organizes a union, and as soon as he becomes involved in a strike, all the other trades unionists throughout the country will dip into their pockets with lightning speed and see how many shackles they can withdraw to donate to his support. This is a mistake. There is too much of these "passing the hat" tactics in the trades union movement. . . . The time is well nigh here when men should organize and build upon organization and remain quiet until they are in a position to do something besides gaining some knowledge of the particulars and tactics of the trades union, before making demands. . . . The policy of the past, of having one or two strikes, paying out all of our money and then beginning to save again for some other strike is foolish in the extreme. We ought to have a good fund to be used when occasion requires, and there need be little fear of failure. Cf. *I. W. W.*, May 1900, p. 52.

The principal items of expenditure are the general expenses, including printing, labels, supplies, salaries, etc., publication of the *International Wood Worker*, the payment of benefits,—death disability, and strike—organizing and traveling expenses, and the per capita tax to the American Federation of Labor. The four items of *general expenses* (including printing, labels, salaries, and supplies. 27.8%), organizing expenses (24%), publication of the *Journal* (14.1%), and the benefits (27.8%) constitute 93.7% of the total expenditure of the Amalgamated Union. The total expenditures show a marked increase in practically all items. Using January 1, 1900 as a dividing line, a comparison of the expenditures between 1896 and 1900 and 1900 and 1903 will show that the payment of benefits during the first period amounted to 59.4% of the total expenditure, a sum which is relatively abnormal and is accounted for by the expenditure on the Oshkosh strike. This strike alone cost the union \$17,205, or 47.2% of the total expense of the union during this period. While the absolute amount expended on this item during the second period had increased from \$21,670 to \$36,426, the relative importance declined to 27.8%. The amount expended on death and disability benefits increased from 8% to 12.9%, or an absolute increase of 5.7 times. The relative amount expended on strikes had declined from over 50% to 13%, and the actual amount spent was just under the sum spent during the first period. General expenses had increased from 20.4% to 27.8% or 4.7 times. The largest growth is shown in the item of organizing and traveling expenses, which increased from 7% to 24%. This was the result of the movement which was begun toward the end of 1898 for the extension of the union. As a result of this agitation the union attained its maximum numerical strength.

The principal safe-guard against mis-application of funds and crookedness in the financial operations of the union lies in the provisions for auditing the accounts of those officers, into whose hands the finances of the union are entrusted. The constitution contains adequate provisions on this point. It provides that the general council shall appoint an auditing committee of three members who shall audit the accounts and examine the vouchers of the general secretary and general treasurer at the end of each

fiscal quarter.¹⁴ This provision, together with the provision requiring these two officials to file bonds, furnishes the union with adequate machinery for safe-guarding its funds, but it must be remembered that the efficiency of such regulations depends not upon the letter of the provision itself, but upon the spirit in which it is administered.

The income of the local organizations is derived from five regular sources,—initiation fees, dues, fines, and charges for clearance and withdrawal cards. Each candidate for membership must pay an initiation fee of not less than one dollar. This fee, however, is not uniform but is subject to local regulation provided that no local charges less than the above minimum.¹⁵ The important source of income is the monthly dues, and here again the union makes provision for a minimum charge of fifty cents per month, and further regulation is left to the local unions.¹⁶ The monthly dues in the Furniture Workers' Union were left to local regulation but a per capita tax of 10c per member per week had to be paid to the executive committee. The Machine Wood Workers provided a minimum monthly due of 20c, which after a long and constant agitation has been raised to 75c per month in the Amalgamated Union. The income from fines and charges for clearance and withdrawal cards is relatively small and irregular. An analysis of the reports of the financial secretary of Local No. 17 of Chicago showed that 78% of local receipts come

¹⁴ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 33. In the Furniture Workers' Union, in both the national and local organizations, the trustees were authorized to examine the financial books of the union at any time and to audit the accounts of the corresponding secretary and treasurer. Cf. p. 101.

¹⁵ The initiation fees charged by the various locals may be seen from the following table taken from the proceedings of the Third Annual Convention.

39 unions reported initiation fees at	\$1.00
18 unions reported initiation fees at	2.00
7 unions reported initiation fees at	2.50
19 unions reported initiation fees at	3.00
26 unions reported initiation fees at	5.00
18 unions reported initiation fees at	10.00
3 unions reported initiation fees at	15.00

¹⁶ The monthly dues charged by the various locals were reported as follows:

10 unions reported dues at	70c-75c per month
19 unions reported dues at	60c-65c per month
86 unions reported dues at	50c-55c per month
14 unions reported dues at	40c per month
1 union reported dues at	30c per month

from dues, 18.6% from fines and clearance cards and the balance from miscellaneous sources. The money paid into the treasury, from whatever source, constitutes a fund from which all the expenses of the local are met. No money can be withdrawn from the treasury, except by an order signed by the president and financial secretary, and bearing the seal of the union.*

Local unions have three principal items of expense,—the per capita taxes, the general running expenses, and the sick and accident benefits, whenever such benefits are paid. An analysis of the local expenditures, as portrayed in the same financial reports, will show the following facts concerning the nature of the expenses of a local union. The largest single item was the per capita tax to the general union. This, together with the per capita taxes to the various organizations with which the local was affiliated, accounted for 31.4% of its expenses. If to this be added the amount paid for convention expenses, the sum chargeable to the maintenance of the union would be raised to 40.4%. The second largest item of expense was what was classified as donations to other unions, which amounted to 22% of the total expense. These donations were made for strike purposes, and if to this be added the amount which the local expended in defraying its own strike expenses, it would bring the total expenditures for this purpose up to 26.5%. The purely local expenses, including salaries, hall rent, printing and advertising, supplies and postage, labor day expenses, entertainments and miscellaneous and benefits, including strike and death benefits, and donations and loans to members, amounted to 37.4%. While these items would vary from local to local, and from year to year in the same local, the conclusion seems clear that less than two-fifths of the expenditures of the local can be chargeable to local purposes, and the balance in one form or another goes toward maintaining the organizations with which the local is affiliated, and to assist other unions that are in distress.

The revenue of the Wood Workers' Council is derived from initiation fees, sale of working cards, a per capita tax and from fines levied by the council on members or locals. Each member

* *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 116.

affiliated with the council is required to carry a quarterly work card, for which a charge of 15c per quarter is made. The local unions are held responsible for the collection and payment of all money due the council, and each local is compelled to take as many working cards as it has members in good standing. In the per capita tax a distinction is made between the journeymen and honorary members and apprentices. Journeymen pay 6c per month, while apprentices between the ages of 16 and 20, and all men over 60 years of age are admitted upon the payment of one half the regular initiation fees and one half of the regular dues.¹⁷ The apprentices are required to carry a special working card for which the full amount is charged. The revenue raised from these various sources is paid into a general fund, and from this fund the expenses of the council are met.

THE BENEFIT SYSTEM

One of the effective appeals which the union makes to the workmen for the sacrifices that are necessary for the support of the union is the right to the protection furnished by the organization through its system of benefits. The system of benefits which the Amalgamated Union has maintained is with few modifications the one which was developed by the International Furniture Workers' Union. As has been shown the adoption of this system was made a condition of amalgamation by the furniture workers.¹⁸ As finally developed by the Furniture Workers' Union the system included the following benefits: tool insurance, strike benefit, sick benefit and a mortality benefit. The Amalgamated Union has added from the Machine Wood Workers' constitution a total disability benefit. The Machine Wood Workers early established a system which provided three benefits,—funeral, total disability, and strike benefits.

The tool insurance benefit was established by the International Furniture Workers at their second convention in 1874.¹⁹ Many

¹⁷ All wood workers from foreign countries are admitted, if they present their membership book as proof that they are members in good standing, by the payment of one-half of the regular initiation fees. *Const. W. W. C. of Chic.*, p. 13.

¹⁸ Cf. p. 68.

¹⁹ *Verhandlungen des Zweiteus Jahres Congresses*. The question occupied the greater part of the time of the delegates at this convention.

of the workmen in this industry owned their own tools, which was, and still is, especially true of the cabinet makers, whose complete set of tools is now valued at from \$100 to \$150. These tools were always subject to risk, and the Tool Insurance Fund was established to cover this risk and protect the workmen against sudden loss. The Machine Wood Workers were not subject to a loss of this kind, as the machinery was the property of the employer and this fact accounts for the absence of tool insurance from the system of benefits established by that organization. In order to participate in this fund the applicant must have tools valued at not less than \$25 nor more than \$100.²⁰ He is required to pay an initiation fee of 7% of the insured value of his tools, or in other words, a minimum fee of \$1.75 and a maximum fee of \$7. In case the losses can not be met by the fees a special assessment can be levied to cover the deficit.²¹ The fund thus established is under separate management and is run as a mutual association. Five-sevenths of the fee is kept under the administration of the local union, which in the larger unions is invested in gilt edge securities.²² The remaining two-sevenths is now paid over to the secretary of the fund.²³ Formerly this sum was paid to the executive committee, who turned the money over to the general treasurer. The accounts were then kept by the corresponding secretary, and the executive committee was required to make half yearly reports to the local unions of the condition of the fund. The board of supervisors watched over the insurance fund as over financial operations of the organization, and in case fraud or improper action was discovered, the board had the right to suspend the guilty member and call for the election of a successor. Such action required four-fifths majority of the board and the aggrieved person had the right to bring the matter before the next convention for final settlement.²⁴

Members participating in the fund have their tools insured against loss by fire, water, falling buildings, explosives, and

²⁰ Formerly \$150.

²¹ *Const. der Werkzeug-Versicherungs Kasse*, 1874, sect. par. 1, sect. 5, par. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, sect. 9, par. 1, 2.

²³ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, p. 55-59.

²⁴ *Const. der Werkzeug-Versicherungs Kasse*, 1874, sect. 9, par. 1-2; sect. 7, par. 1-11.

losses of similar character. The insurance will be maintained as long as the member remains in good standing with the local, and keeps all of the assessments paid up to the insurance fund. In case a local is not in good standing with the national organization its members lose the right to participate in the benefits. In the Amalgamated Union, should the member take out a withdrawal card, he is entitled to receive the five-sevenths of his initiation fee which is on deposit with the local union, and on return to the organization he may be reinstated by paying back this amount to the local. In case of death of a participating member, the relatives receive the full 7% of the insured value of tools. When a loss occurs, an investigating committee is appointed by the local, who, together with the local treasurer, investigates the claims and assess the loss. If the claims are found to be genuine, and the member in good standing, the benefit is paid.²⁵

In case of dissatisfaction with the decision of the investigating committee, the difference can be adjusted by voluntary arbitration,—the members selecting one man, the committee one, and these two selecting the third. The decision of this committee is final. The insurance fund thus established and managed can be maintained so long as there are as many as two locals supporting it, and at least one member in each local having tools insured to the value of \$25. The first cost of the insurance to the members is somewhat high, but for a period of years it makes very cheap insurance. Between 1886 and 1890 the insured value of the tools was \$76,660, and the assessed losses \$7,625.25. This would be a yearly rate of about 21½% of the assessed value of the tools.²⁶ Oftentimes the interest on the fund on deposit with the locals is sufficient to meet the losses for a period of six months or a year. In fact there was no assessment made from 1894 to 1898, so that during this period the yearly rate was 13¼%. This will fluctuate of course with the number of assessments which are necessary to cover the losses.²⁷

²⁵ In the I. F. W. U. good standing meant dues and assessment paid to date. If unpaid for 8 weeks, the member lost his benefits; if for three months, the member might be reinstated on payment of dues; if six months in arrears, the member was dropped. *Ibid*, sect. par. 1; sect. 10, par. 2-3.

²⁶ *Proceedings Eighth Convention I. F. W. U.*, p. 19.

²⁷ *Const. A. W. W. I. U. Rev.* 1904, p. 55-59, sect. 1-17.

The delegates to the first convention of the Furniture Workers' Union pledged the support of the new organization to its members in their disputes with the employers. For this purpose the executive committee was authorized to set aside from the weekly dues a reserve fund to be used in case of strikes. Whenever this fund fell below \$2 per member, the executive committee could levy a special assessment in such amounts as the circumstances required. Half of this fund was kept on deposit with the local treasuries, but it was at the disposal only of the executive committee. The new organization promised to pay from this fund a weekly benefit of \$5 to all members in good standing, who were out of work on account of a strike, that had been recognized and approved by the executive committee. As in case of all the benefits of the union, the strike benefit suffered on account of the low dues and the high benefits paid.²⁸ The natural result of such a system is, that in time of a crisis the whole fund becomes depleted. Temporary relief may be furnished to a portion of the membership, but a large part of the members may get little or no protection for their contributions. To be effective the dues should bear some relation to the risk involved, and in this respect the system of the Furniture Workers' Union was very deficient.

The Machine Wood Workers made no provision for the establishment of a strike fund at their first convention but announced that a strike benefit would be paid, providing the strike had been duly authorized by the general council.²⁹ The funds necessary to pay this benefit were to be secured by a special assessment of ten cents per month, payable by those members who were not affected by the strike. At the second convention a strike fund was established by setting aside a per capita tax of five cents per month per member, and by giving the general council the power to increase this fund by special assessment in case the fund became depleted.³⁰ The same convention provided for the pay-

²⁸ Cf. p. 112.

²⁹ *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. IX, sect. 1.

³⁰ *M. W. W. Sept.*, 1891, p. 2. Strikes were to be declared only as the last resort and then only when supported by a three-fourths' majority of the votes of the local, cast by secret ballot. All members of the local had to be notified that a meeting to vote on a strike was to be held. *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. IX, sect. 2, 4.

ment of a strike benefit of five dollars per week to all members out on duly approved strikes,—the benefit to be paid as long as the strike was continued.

The provision for strike benefits in the Amalgamated Union, while differing somewhat in detail, has followed the same general plan already outlined. All members, engaged in a legally authorized strike, are entitled to \$5 per week as long as the strike continues.³¹ An improvement has been made in abolishing the strike fund and paying benefits out of the general receipts of the union. General Secretary Kidd called attention to the need for this change at the Third Annual Convention and the suggestion was later adopted. This change places all the funds of the general organization at the disposal of the general council in case of a protracted strike.³² In case the general funds become depleted the general council may levy a special assessment of twenty-five cents per month on all members not affected by the strike. The strength of a union is no greater than its ability to protect its members in their effort to maintain their bargaining power. The experience of the Amalgamated Union has shown, even when all the funds of the organization were available for this purpose, that strike benefits had to be suspended during periods of large and prolonged strikes. And from the founding of the Furniture Workers' Union to the present time, the officials of the organization have had a constant struggle to convince the membership of the necessity of providing adequate means for supporting the men out of work on account of a contest in behalf of union principles.

A large part of the Second Convention of the International Furniture Workers' Union was devoted to the question of sick benefits. Provision was made for the establishment of sick benefits by the local unions and, like the tool insurance fund, the right to participate was made optional. The fund was created by the

³¹ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 139.

³² *Proceedings Third Conv.*, p. 16. Kidd recommended that the provision requiring the payment of \$5 benefit be repealed and the general council be empowered to donate what the situation and the general treasury would warrant. He stated that this had, as a matter of practice, been done by the general council, for otherwise many of those involved in strikes would have received no financial assistance.

contributions of the participating members, and the management of the fund differed widely in the various locals. The dues ranged from 30c to 50c per month.³³ Some locals charged an initiation fee and this varied from \$1 to \$3.³⁴ The benefit provided for was usually out of all proportion to the premium charged. One of the New York locals provided a benefit of \$6 per week for 13 weeks, \$4 per week for the next 26 weeks and then \$2.50 per week until the amount paid had reached \$390, after which a weekly benefit of \$2 was to be paid without limitation as to time.³⁵ A Cleveland local made provision for a benefit of \$4 per week for six months, after which the local took whatever action seemed wise.³⁶ These cases may be taken as typical of the sick benefits as managed by the local organizations, and illustrate the attitude of the membership toward the question of benefits.

The International Furniture Workers' Union established a sick benefit in 1880, but the provisions were completely changed at the convention of 1884. The constitution of the fund as modified at that time, required a medical examination of all prospective members. The membership was divided into three classes, and the initiation fees and dues were graded according to the class. The initiation fees were \$3, \$5, and \$8, and the dues were \$.50, \$.75, and \$1 per month respectively. After three months each member was entitled to a benefit of \$6, \$9, or \$12 per week, according to the class to which he belonged. The benefit began with the first day of sickness, but it would not be paid unless the duration of the sickness was for one week or longer. Besides the payment of the sick benefit, free medical assistance was given also in many cases, the union retaining the services of certain physicians for this purpose.³⁷

The practice of leaving the provision for sick benefits to the

³³ *Cleveland Local No. 2*, 1882.

³⁴ *Cleveland local No. 2*, had a graded initiation fee. Up to 45 years of age the fee was \$2. and \$1 per year additional for each year up to 50 years of age.

³⁵ *Local No. 9*, (N. Y.) 1881.

³⁶ *Cleveland Local No. 2*.

³⁷ *Constitution of the Sick Benefit Fund of the I. F. W. U.*, 1885, Art. II, par. 2-4; Art. III, par. 2; Art. IV, par. 1; Cf. also *I. F. W. Journal*, Aug. 17, 1889.

local unions has been retained by the Amalgamated Union, and there is a wide variation in the rules of the locals governing the benefits, except in one feature, namely, that the benefits promised bear little or no relation to the charges made for its support.³⁸ It is not uncommon to find locals agreeing to pay \$4 and \$5 per week in sick benefits from funds collected in dues of 50c per month. The inevitable result has been the depletion of the funds. In some cases the locals have established separate sick benefit funds to which members contribute a sum in excess of their monthly dues. The weakness of the system has been recognized by the general officers. General Secretary Kidd in his report to the convention in 1904, sets forth very vividly the situation as it prevailed at that time³⁹; he commended "the goodness of heart" which prompted the unions to adopt such generous policies, but called attention to the fact that such a policy was suicidal, because it robbed the local of its sinews of war, rendering it weak and impotent. He argued that "a trades union was a business institution and should be governed accordingly," and therefore a union governed by sentiment was doomed to failure. Furthermore, he condemned the practice of making donations and loans to members, arguing that no well-governed union will allow its treasury to be depleted by such methods, nor should any union be permitted to bring its career to such an ignoble end.

All three unions made provision for the payment of a benefit upon the death of a member. The Furniture Workers' Union paid a mortuary benefit, which was run on a mutual basis. An initiation fee of \$1 was charged, and an assessment was made in case of the death of a member. The benefit paid was \$250 upon the death of a member, and \$100 upon the death of the wife of a member.⁴⁰ In the Machine Wood Workers' Union a

³⁸ *Convt. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 138. The Amalgamated Union is in no sense responsible for the payment of sick benefits established by the locals. The Machine Wood Workers' had no provision for sick benefits, except that made by the local unions.

³⁹ *Proceedings, Third Annual Convention*, p. 29.

⁴⁰ The monthly cost per member from July, 1883 to September, 1884 was given as 16c. *Protokoll der sechsten Congresses*, p. 9.

funeral benefit of \$60 was paid from the general treasury upon the death of a member and \$30 upon the death of a member's wife, provided that each were in good health at the time the member was admitted to the union.⁴¹ The funeral benefit paid by the Amalgamated Union is graded according to the length of time a member has been continuously in good standing. A benefit of \$50 is paid, providing the member has been six months in good standing; \$75 after eighteen months, and \$100 after three years' membership. This benefit is paid to the widow, or other relatives of the deceased member, and it amounts to little more than the payment of the funeral expenses, which are usually a heavy burden for the family of most laborers.⁴²

The Machine Wood Workers' Union provided for a total disability benefit of \$100 to be paid to any member who had been over one year in good standing at the time of the accident which incapacitated him, providing that the accident was not caused through drunkenness or other misconduct.⁴³ This benefit was incorporated into the benefit system of the Amalgamated Union and like the funeral benefits, the amount paid was graded according to the length of time the member had been continuously in good standing. The amounts paid were \$150, \$200 and \$250, according as the member had been in good standing one, two or three years.⁴⁴ The amount paid from the treasury of the Amalgamated Union on account of benefits during the interval between 1900 and 1904, was \$16,900 in death and disability, and \$17,060 in strike benefits, or 25% of the total expenditure of the union between the dates mentioned.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Const., M. W. W. I. U.* 1890, Art. XXI sect. 1-5. The benefit paid upon the death of the wife of a member was discontinued at the second convention and the benefit payable upon the death of a member was raised to \$75. Cf. *M. W. W.*, Sept. 1891, p. 2.

⁴² *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 136.

⁴³ *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Art. XXI, sect. 4. The amount paid was raised at the second convention to \$250. Cf. *M. W. W.*, Sept. 1891, p. 2. At this convention an accident benefit was established which provided for the payment of \$6 per week for a period not to exceed ten weeks, payable to those incapacitated by any accident resulting from the pursuance of regular work. This benefit was discontinued during the first year on account of the number of claims made upon the funds.

⁴⁴ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 137.

⁴⁵ *Proceedings Third Annual Convention*, p. 26-28.

In the payment of all claims the initiative must be taken by the persons interested in the claim. Application must first be made to the local union with full particulars concerning the basis for the claim. The local then becomes the agent, as it were, for the individuals applying. A committee of three is appointed by the local to investigate the claim and report back to the local. If the claim is approved, the financial secretary of the local forwards it to the general secretary with full particulars of the case, together with a medical certificate from a reputable physician, if the case involves the death or disability of a member. The financial secretary is also required to send a correct statement of the standing of the members, together with his membership book, as a means of determining the justice of the claim. The general secretary passes upon the case, according to the evidence at hand.⁴⁶ But the parties interested may appeal from the decision of the secretary to the general council, whose decision is final. In case the claim is granted, payment is made through the financial secretary of the local union, to which the member was affiliated, to the party entitled to receive the benefit. All claims against the Amalgamated Union of whatever character must be filed with the general secretary within sixty days from the time they accrue, otherwise they will not be allowed.

⁴⁶ *Const. A. W. W. I. U.*, Rev. 1904, sect. 142-49. Formerly these claims were passed on by the General Council, but as it was a matter of routine in most cases, the work was turned over to the Secretary, protecting the membership by an appeal to the General Council. The regulations governing the payment of claims in the Amalgamated Union were incorporated in large measure from those that existed in the M. W. W. I. U.. Cf. *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, Art. XXII, sect. 1-3.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF THE UNION

The objects of the Furniture Workers' Union were declared to be "united resistance to all dangers that threaten the existence of the members and the advancement of our common welfare in every possible manner. To accomplish these objects we shall struggle to uphold and to increase the rate of wages, shorten the work time, abolish the contract system, provide for a mutual assistance in case of strikes, of loss by fire, sickness, death, lack of employment and legal prosecution of the employers."¹ The spirit of these objects was not materially changed by the Machine Wood Workers who declared that the purposes of their organization were to secure an amelioration of the conditions of labor in the wood working industries, to secure higher wages, to regulate the hours of labor, and to secure "the social, moral and intellectual elevation" of the workmen.² In order to accomplish these results the union proposed to establish a fund for the protection of its members, to assist them in finding work when unemployed,³ to provide against sickness, death, and disability, and to regulate the relations between the workmen and the employer as well as the relations between members of the organization.⁴

In fulfilling its pledges to the workmen the Furniture Workers Union took a firm stand in regard to such industrial prob-

¹ *Möbel-Arbeiter Journal*, Feb. 1883, p. 4. The legal prosecution referred to arose out of the frequent necessity of suing employers on account of loss of tools occasioned by fire in workshops. To assist this work a legal benefit was established in some of the locals.

² *Const. M. W. W. I. U.*, 1890, Preamble.

³ Employment bureaus were established by the locals. One was established in Chicago in 1892. *M. W. W.*, June 1892, p. 9.

⁴ *Const. M. W. W. U.*, 1890, Art. I, sect. 2.

lems as child labor, piece work, contract labor, and the shorter work day. In the first convention the union declared against child labor, which had become an evil in certain branches of the industry as the result of the introduction of machinery. Frequent accusations were made against the employers for violations of the law in regard to the employment of children. The union had no constitutional regulation of apprenticeship, so that no attempt was made to control the number of workmen entering the trade.

The piece work system was strongly opposed by the union. There were at least three arguments used against this system. 1) It gave to the employer an opportunity to deceive, and to take an undue advantage of the workmen, on account of the frequent price regulations made necessary by the introduction of new machinery and new processes. 2) The system was opposed also on the ground that it constantly urged the workmen to exert themselves unduly, and in this way to lessen the demand for labor.⁵ 3) And finally, the system tended to create a spirit of jealousy among the workmen, which was detrimental to harmony and co-operation in the trade.

The opposition to the piece work system took the form of an argument in favor of uniform wages and payment on a time basis. It was argued that the employers by the use of machinery could employ less skilled workmen, and could in this way force the wages of skilled workmen to a lower level. If the system were abolished, the workmen would be better off because the weekly pay would then be certain, and because it would be easier to control the wage-scale. Men working by the day, it was argued, would recognize more quickly that they had a common interest, and under these conditions they would be more likely to pull together for a common cause—the increase of the wage-scale. Once the system had been abolished it would then be necessary for the union “*to strive for a rate of wages as nearly as possible uniform.*”⁶ The grading of wages is always used by

⁵ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, June 8, 1889, p. 1.

⁶ The italics appear in the article.

the employers to keep wages down, and therein they will succeed as long as they deal with the individual in fixing the rate of wages. . . . This grading system, furthermore, gives almost as much opportunity for using the individual selfishness as the piece work system. As far as classification of wages, according to various grades of skill and experience may be considered necessary, fixed limits might be agreed upon; but within these limits the rate should be the same for all. Such a system would no doubt meet with much opposition even among the workmen, springing from the same motive from which the workmen still prefer piece work; but the whole trade would be decidedly benefited. . . . We should lose no time in giving our earnest attention to these questions: Abolition of piece-work and the adoption of uniform wage-rates." ⁷

The agitation for a shorter work day occupied a large place in the policy of the Furniture Workers' Union. From the date of the organization until the time of the amalgamation with the Machine Wood Workers, the union was constantly urging a shorter work-day. The question came up for discussion in some form at every convention. The representatives of the Furniture Workers took an active part in the discussion, and in the framing of the resolution passed in 1885 by the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada,⁸ recommending that the eight hour day should constitute the legal work day "from and after May 1st, 1886," for all unions affiliated with that organization, and recommending further that these unions should direct their actions so as to conform with this resolution.⁹ The delegates from the Furniture Workers argued against making this resolution general on the grounds that many of the unions were new and untried,

⁷ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, June 8, 1889, p. 1.

⁸ This organization became the American Federation of Labor in 1886.

⁹ The resolution in full was as follows: "Resolved, By the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the U. S. and Canada, that eight hours shall constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886, and that we recommend to labor organized throughout this jurisdiction, that they so direct their laws as to conform to this resolution by the time named." *Moebel-Arbeiter Journal*, July 17, 1885, p. 1.

and for this reason, they urged that the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions should designate such unions as were sufficiently prepared to undertake the action recommended.¹⁰ Fear was expressed that the whole movement would go up in aimless enthusiasm and thereby receive a decided setback, and so far as it affected the Furniture Workers, this feeling was expressed as follows: "Especially for our trade the question of introducing the eight hour day is of too much importance to suffer ourselves to assist in kindling a straw-fire enthusiasm."¹¹

The policy took definite shape in January, 1886. The Executive Committee submitted resolutions to the locals, requesting that they vote upon them, and report the result not later than February 25th, in order that the International Union might comply with the instructions of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, which had set March 1st, 1886, as the date for reporting such information.¹² The resolutions declared for a reduction of hours and a demand for higher wages at the same time. The Furniture Workers were very positive in the belief that the whole movement should be centered in the one question of hours, and they were insistent in their arguments that the wage question should not be involved in the demands of the locals at this time. In order to strengthen the movement the locals were recommended to take the following action: First, that a weekly assessment be levied on all members having employment on May 1, and that efforts be made to collect similar accounts from laborers who were not members, for the purpose of supporting those who were compelled to strike for the eight hour day. Second, wherever there was no combination of different trade organizations, these trade

¹⁰ *Moebel-Arbeiter Journal*, July 17, 1885.

¹¹ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, July 31, 1885, p. 1.

¹² The resolutions were as follows: Resolved: That union No. declares in favor of the introduction of the eight hour work day from May 1st, next.

Resolved, That simultaneous with the introduction of the eight hour work day, higher wages shall be demanded.

Resolved, That union No. with all the means at its command will endeavor to carry out this rule in all factories and workshops of our branch of the trade. *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Jan. 1886.

unions should immediately unite and should pledge themselves to support those who desire to introduce the eight hour day and were compelled to strike for it.¹³ The May movement affected the Furniture Worker in much the same way that it did all other labor organizations of that time. There was a rapid increase in membership during the early months of the year, a large number of men on strike after May 1, the strike fund depleted and a decline in the membership; this, in short, is the history of that movement. The Furniture Workers recognized that the May movement was a failure, but their ardor was not lessened by the outcome, for at the Seventh Convention in September 1886, a resolution was passed in favor of keeping up the agitation for the shorter work day, and instructing their delegates to the convention of the Federation of Organized Trade and Labor Unions, to urge in that convention that hereafter such agreements be effected in but one trade at a time, and that all other trade organizations should assist that one financially and morally to carry out the plan.¹⁴ From this time until the amalgamation with the Machine Wood Workers, the Furniture Workers continued to advocate this policy. It appears, then, that the Furniture Workers consistently adhered to the policy of a shorter work day, and while they were swept into the over-ambitious attempt of the May movement in 1886, their counsel was on the whole conservative and on the side of what was feasible.

The policy of the Machine Wood Workers' union on such questions as hours, child labor, and immigration was determined in a very large degree by the conditions in the industry. The machine processes offered an opportunity for employing unskilled workmen. On this account in certain centers the competition of immigrants and woman and child labor was very marked. Consequently the wages were low,—in some cases extremely low and the hours of labor long. The wages varied from 6 to 35 cents per hour with an average of from 15 to 18 cents; the hours varied from 9 to 12, and the low wages were

¹³ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Feb. 12, 1886, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Proceedings Seventh Convention*.

usually associated with long hours.¹⁵ Under such circumstances it was perfectly natural for the union to stand for a shorter work day, and against the employment of women and children, and to exercise its power in organizing the immigrants.

The policy of the Amalgamated Union has been to control the supply of labor, and no serious attempt has been made to set up barriers against workmen entering the trade. In 1904 the highest initiation fee charged was \$15, and this in only three locals. Eighteen locals charged \$10, while 107 charged \$5 or less.¹⁶ In no case did the dues exceed 75 cents per month, the majority of the locals charging 50 and 60 cents.¹⁷ The union does not set up any serious obstacles to young men entering the trade. The apprenticeship rules provide that apprentices between 16 and 19 years of age may become what are known as "honorary members."¹⁸ The question of apprenticeship is left to local regulation. The usual rule is one apprentice to four or five journeymen, although some locals limit the number to as few as one to ten. They are required to pay 25 cents per month dues, and carry the quarterly working card. They serve three years at the trade before they are called upon to pay full dues, and be entitled to full privileges.¹⁹ No initiation fee is charged at the time of initiation into full membership.

In regard to hours the regulations vary from local to local, and the last available reports show that the work day varies from 8 to 10 hours. In 1904, 61 locals reported a ten hour day, while 77 locals reported a nine hour day or better. Only three locals could report an eight hour day.²⁰ The attitude of the union

¹⁵ In Grand Rapids the hours were from 10 to 12, and the wage from 12½ to 22½ cents per hour. *International Wood Worker*, Oct. 1899, p. 114. In Oshkosh the hours were from 9 to 10, and the wages 6 to 15 cents per hour. *Ibid.*, April, 1898.

¹⁶ *Proceedings Third Annual Convention*, p. 28.

¹⁷ *Constitution*, Revised 1904, Sect. 68-70. All applicants for membership who are 60 years or over, or of poor health, may become honorary members. They pay 25 cents per month dues, and except for death and disability benefits, they enjoy all rights and privileges of the union.

¹⁸ Dues have been raised by last convention to 75c per month, subject to ratification. *Proceedings Fourth Convention*, p. 56.

¹⁹ *Constitution*, Revised 1904, Sect. 70.

²⁰ *Proceedings of Third Annual Convention*, p. 28.

has been strongly in favor of the shorter work day, and in many places it has succeeded in reducing the number of hours of work.

There are no regulations in regard to the introduction and use of machinery, or the number of machines to be run by each workman. In fact there is little occasion for such questions to rise in the industry. There has come up at frequent intervals the question of workmen owning certain kinds of tools, and the sentiment has developed that all tools should be owned and provided by the employer. The Wood Workers' Council of Chicago has a regulation which prohibits any member from offering to furnish his own knives, clamps, and hand saws and screws as an inducement to obtain work (except the wood turners), subject to a fine of \$25, and suspension from the union, until the fine is paid.²¹ There are no regulations which are intended to restrict the output of the workmen, and if such restriction exists, it is individual and outside of the formal rules of the organization.

THE TRADE AGREEMENT

The activities of a trade union center around the trade agreement. If a union accomplishes its purpose well, it must be successful in collective bargaining, for the only justification of its existence is the aid which it renders in improving the conditions under which the workmen perform their labor, and in effecting greater justice in the distribution of the products of industry. In the history of trade unionism the union has had first to gain recognition of the right to exist as a combination of workmen, then the right to bargain collectively, which implies the right to quit work collectively,—or in other words, to strike. The right to combine and the right to strike have both received legal recognition, so that with the growth in strength of a union, more attention is paid to the methods of framing and enforcing the trade agreement, than to the question of strikes. The making of the agreement to-day among the most efficient labor organizations has become a legislative act, participated in by the two most important industrial parties, namely, the employers' asso-

²¹ *Constitution of A. W. W. C. of Chicago*, Sect. 25.

ciations and the trade unions. The agreement itself becomes the industrial law governing the conditions of employment in a particular trade for the period of time specified by the agreement.²²

The agreement of the Wood Workers' Union does not regulate the conditions of employment for the entire industry, but each agreement applies only to a particular city or district, and often it applies only to a particular branch of the trade. The initiative in framing an agreement is taken either by a local or by a wood workers' council, and is in the form of a proposition setting forth the terms which are agreeable to the union. This proposition is then submitted to the employers, who accept it, reject it, or submit a counter-proposition; and, when an agreement is finally reached, it is usually the result of a compromise. Prior to the Grand Rapids convention in 1900, no central authority was exercised over the terms of an agreement, so that the terms depended upon the relative strength of the local union. Since that date all proposed agreements must be submitted to the general council, and must receive its sanction.²³ In this way the general officers exercise a decided influence over the conditions of employment, and can prevent a local in any part of the country from lowering the standards of the union. This does not mean that the conditions of employment are uniform throughout the country. As a matter of fact, allowance is made in negotiating an agreement for all the forces that are likely to affect the trade. This may be illustrated by the agreement with the Planing Mill Association in Chicago in 1904, where these questions were all thoroughly treated. The employers argued against an increase in the wage scale on the ground that the wages asked were higher than those paid by their competitors in the Mississippi River towns, and other costs were also higher in Chicago, so that the demands of the union would set up unfair conditions of competition which would result in the loss of business to the Chicago firms, and that this would react upon the conditions of employment. The union leaders pointed out the fact that the firms in the Mississippi River towns were receiving their raw material from the same sources of supply as the Chicago firms, and that

²² The method developed by the United Mine Workers is the best example.

²³ *Proceedings, Second Convention*, p. 67.

they were paying Chicago freight rates on this raw material; and besides, if they entered into competition with Chicago firms in the latter's logical market, the former would have to pay the freight on the finished product from the Mississippi River to the point of sale; and that these rates were much higher than the rate on raw materials. This difference, the union leaders argued, was sufficient to offset differences in wage-scale and in rents. The knowledge of these facts and the successful application of this kind of argument could scarcely exist, if the framing of an agreement were left entirely to the local unions. The policy of revision of all agreements by the general officers has four important beneficial effects: First, impossible and unreasonable demands are struck out; second, underbidding from whatever cause is prevented; third, greater intelligence is brought to bear upon the framing of the agreement, and fourth, this results, in greater uniformity of wage scales throughout the industry, thus equalizing the conditions of competition among the employers. But before an agreement can become effective, it must be submitted in its final form to a mass meeting of the workman for ratification. This method of negotiating an agreement satisfies the democratic spirit which pervades the union, but it is open to several important criticisms. In the first place, an effort to raise the wages of the skilled workmen may be blocked by the votes of the unskilled, or of one group of workmen by the votes of another group. The jealousies of one group may prevent the union from taking advantage of an opportunity to raise the standard of another group, and thus destroy the solidarity of interests among the membership. This evil has been removed in a large measure in Chicago by the device of submitting the question of an advance in wages only to the group of workmen affected. For this purpose the wood workers' council has divided the workmen into four groups—groups that correspond in the main with the branches of the industry carried on in Chicago, namely, the Planing Mill employees, the Office Fixture employees, the Furniture Workers, and the sash, blind, and door workers. So long as the union adheres to the policy of the referendum in ratifying agreements, this method is an improvement over the

method of submitting each agreement to a mass meeting of all workmen.

In the second place the submission of an agreement to a referendum vote ties the hands of the officials. It depreciates their authority in the eyes of the employers, and it tends to arouse suspicion among the workmen themselves. The employers are likely to say, "Why treat with you officials when the agreement has to be submitted to the workmen for approval? Why not treat with the men direct?" On the other hand, the officers may make the best terms which they think possible, and yet the workmen may not be satisfied with them. In case the officials attempt to influence the vote of the mass meeting by speaking in favor of the terms, they lay themselves open to the charge of disloyalty to the cause, and to the charge of graft. It sometimes happens, as in the case of the Chicago Office Fixture Workers' agreement in 1903,²⁴ that a rejection of the agreement will lead to better terms, but the chances are just as great that the employers will refuse to grant better terms, and such refusal usually results in a strike, an expensive alternative to each side. The union cannot afford to follow any policy that will depreciate any representative of the union in the eyes of the employers, or of the public. The union may fail to accomplish its purpose, even when its cause is just and fair, because the methods used in advancing its demands have aroused the opposition of the employers and the public.

The agreement is frequently very extensive in the number of items which it covers, but the principal provisions are for the recognition of the union and the closed shop, for a limitation of hours and the adoption of a minimum wage scale. It naturally applies only to those shops which are included in the contract, and the direct effects may be seen here, but there is an indirect effect which is too important to pass over without consideration. In so far as the conditions of labor in the organized shops are improved by the agreement, there naturally arises a strong pressure on those unorganized to meet these conditions, or to lose the more efficient workmen. This influence is felt particularly in

²⁴ *Inter Ocean*, July 19, 1903; *Journal*, Aug. 1903, p. 54.

reference to wages and hours. The constant pressure of the union for higher wages, and shorter hours has affected the unorganized shops to a greater degree than the superintendents of such shops are usually willing to admit. It is true that the existence of unorganized shops tends to counteract the force of the agreement, and thus retard the efforts of the union to improve the conditions of labor. This counteracting force may be as effective as that of the agreement to improve the conditions of employment, so that the importance of the indirect effect depends after all upon the strength of the union.

Most agreements contain a clause, providing for the appointment of a board of arbitration, whose duties are judicial rather than executive. This board usually interprets the terms of the agreement and determines whether there has been a violation of the contract. So far as the agreement goes, the enforcement of the terms depends upon the good faith of the contracting parties, and the mutual interest of these parties may be sufficiently powerful to cause an observance of the terms of the contract. However, if such interest does not exist and a violation takes place, the injured party may appeal to the courts for the enforcement of the contract, or for the collection of damages, a practice not ordinarily resorted to because the two parties do not stand upon the same basis on account of the difficulty of enforcing a decree for damages against the union. In recent years, however, civil liability of the unions has been held both in England and in the United States,²⁵ but in the United States the absence of large accumulated funds tends to render this method impractical from the point of view of the employer.

In order to facilitate the enforcement of the agreement, the Wood Workers in Chicago developed a kind of dual executive, voluntary in character, which in a way furnished a method of enforcement. The plan was in operation between the union and the Planing Mill Association, with which the union had a closed shop agreement. The secretary of the International Union and the secretary of the Planing Mill Association constituted a com-

²⁵ Taff Vale Case was a case in point, but the Trades Dispute Act has removed the unions from civil liability, unless the case would lie against the union if no strike were on.

mittee, to whom all complaints of violations of the agreement were referred. Whenever a complaint arose, it was brought to the secretary of the organization to which the complainant belonged, who then brought the matter to the attention of the secretary of the other organization. The two secretaries then went over the complaint and determined first whether there had been a violation of the agreement, and in case there had been a breach of terms, the secretary of the offending organization brought the matter to the attention of the violator. Both the union and the employers seemed satisfied with the operation of this plan while it was in existence. The method was found effective in removing many of the minor but annoying differences between employers and employees. The employer felt less interference with his business, and was more willing to listen to a complaint coming from the secretary of his own organization, than to one coming from the business agent of the union, and consequently he was more likely to comply with terms of the agreement. But it is clear that the effectiveness of this method rested entirely upon the mutual confidence of the two organizations. The limits, then, of enforcing an agreement are determined by the good faith of the parties, and by the civil liability of the union.

In order to make its demands more effective a labor organization may attempt not only to control the supply of labor, but it may also appeal to the public for assistance through the demand for products made under union or "fair" conditions. This may take the form of advertising certain goods because they are "fair," or it may take the form of discriminating against certain goods because they are "unfair." In either of these cases it is necessary to have some method of identifying union made goods. The method now generally in use among unions for distinguishing goods made under "fair" conditions is the union label. The first mention of the use of a furniture workers' label appears in the issue of the *Journal* for February 26, 1886, when the cigar maker's and hatter's labels are referred to as means of identifying union made goods, and the need for a furniture workers' label was emphasized.²⁶ Three difficulties in

²⁶ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Feb. 26, 1886, p. 1.

the way of adopting such a label were pointed out, as follows: First, to find an easily controllable and distinguishable trade mark or label; second, to agree upon the conditions under which the said trade mark or label should be furnished to the manufacturer or producer; and third, to find some practical means of agitating for the purchase of union made furniture. Immediate steps were taken for the selection and adoption of a label.²⁷ The rules adopted for granting the label, indicated that the union regarded the label as a privilege granted to the employer, rather than a method of extending the power of the union. The conditions include the absence of prison labor, and the contract labor system, and the presence of the eight hour day, the union shop, and a satisfactory wage-scale. If these conditions were present the label was granted. It is interesting to note in this connection that at the Seventh Convention of the International Union, held in 1886, the boycott was formerly endorsed as a method of promoting the interests of the union, which indicates how closely these two methods—the label and the boycott—were related in the policies of this organization. The agitation for the label was continued during the years prior to and after the amalgamation of the Furniture Workers with the Machine Wood Workers' Union. The Machine Wood Workers adopted a label in 1895 for all union made wooden ware.²⁸ The label of the Furniture Workers was at first a rubber stamp, which was used in placing the union design upon all products made under union conditions. Later a metal label was adopted which was tacked on the more expensive wood products.²⁹ At present there are two labels in use of the same general design. One is a decalcomania transfer label, which is placed upon fine work, such as office and bar fixtures, high class furniture, and other work of similar character. This label is placed in position before the goods are finished, and when varnished over, it has something of the appearance of a hand painted design. The other is a rubber stamp which makes an ink impression, and is used upon common ma-

²⁷ Cf. *F. W. J.*, Apr. 25, 1886, p. 1, for a copy of the rules. Also p. 3 for facsimile of the label.

²⁸ *Machine Wood Worker*, May 1895, p. 6.

²⁹ The metal label was discontinued in 1900. Cf. *I. W. W.*, June, 1900, p. 67.

terial, such as building material, boxes, and other rough work. In each case the label is paid for by the local union and not by the manufacturer, as formerly.³⁰ The labels are issued to the local unions, and in the shop they are in the custody of the shop steward, who is responsible for their safe keeping, and for the proper use of the labels on material put out by the factory.

The union claims three things for the label: First, by complying with the union conditions and employing only union workmen, the manufacturer is assured of having the most efficient laborers to be found; second, the use of the label furnishes an inexpensive means of advertising the products of the manufacturer; third, the label insures the public that the goods have been made under the best of conditions. From what has been said it is clear that there has been a change in the attitude of the union in regard to the use of the label, as the local now furnishes the label, which indicates that it is recognized as a means of furthering union interests.

The argument that the label is an inexpensive means of advertising for the manufacturer rests upon the assumption that there is an active demand for union made goods. Whatever may be said concerning this assumption as a general argument in favor of the label, it certainly applies with less force to the demand for wood products. Such a demand could arise only from two sources, either from a public in sympathy with the union, or from a large consumption of the products by the unionists themselves. In view of the fact that the unionists consume only a small portion of the wood products, there could be little advantage to the manufacturer from this source. With the exception of certain lines of furniture, the demand for union made wood products does not arise from the unionists. The largest demand for the label and the most hearty co-operation with the union in extending its use has come from firms manufacturing bar fixtures. The attitude of these firms has been affected in no small degree by the Brewery Associations of the country. These as-

³⁰ The price of the decalcomanie transfer stamp is \$1.50 per hundred for the large size and \$1.00 per hundred for the small size. The only expense to the locals using the rubber stamp is the cost of the ink pads which are sold to the locals at 25 cents each. Cf. *L. W. U.*, April, 1901, p. 30.

sociations have found it to their advantage to co-operate with the union in extending the use of the label.³¹

The argument that the label insures the public against poor workmanship and unsanitary conditions of employment is true enough but the way in which the argument is put obscures the real use of the label. The union grants the use of the label to a manufacturer, not because the conditions of employment are good, but because the employer has complied with certain demands which the union has made. The union will be influenced quite as much in granting the label by the demand for the recognition of the union or the closed shop, as by demands for sanitary conditions of employment. Just as good workmanship and just as good conditions of employment may exist in shops which do not have the label. Hence, instead of being a stamp of excellence in workmanship and of sanitary conditions of employment, the label becomes a means by which the union endeavors to enlist the public in favor of union policies and in aiding the union in securing its demands.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNION

Closely associated with the industrial policy of a union is the political and social philosophy which actuates its membership. The Amalgamated Union inherited its political attitude as well as its social philosophy from the Furniture Workers' Union. There was a strong disposition in this organization to urge upon the membership independent action in politics. This was due partially to a class feeling which existed in the minds of many of the members, and partially to a lack of confidence in the old political parties, which was based upon what the union regarded as unjust treatment at the hands of these parties. The clearest statement of the union's position in regard to political activity came out in an article which reviewed the labor movement for a period of years with special reference to labor legislation, which had been passed by the old parties. The article concluded as follows: "Therefore, we believe that it is the best policy for the

³¹ Cf. *L. W. U.*, 1903, p. 165, for resolutions passed by the Brewers' Exchange of Baltimore, showing attitude of brewers toward union label.

workmen to enter an election campaign as a class, to nominate workmen for office, to elect them and make what their constituents desire should be done for the working class, instead of supporting the candidates of one, or the other of the old corrupt political parties, and when they are elected to run after them with complaints and petitions. Of course it would be necessary for organized labor to step into the political arena as a solid mass. Where they fail to do this, the effect will generally be to disintegrate their organizations; and they invariably find out that the other parties in no way recognize their claims. For these reasons elections ought not to be participated in except when the organized workmen are united."³² This view received official stamp at the Baltimore Convention in 1887, when the following resolution was passed:

"Whereas, there is a constantly increasing tendency of the executive authorities to arbitrarily use their power against the political and economic rights of citizens, therefore be it,

Resolved, That we caution the working people to guard more effectually their rights as citizens by a most generous support to the independent political movements of the working classes."³³ This expression of the political attitude of the organization indicates that the membership believed in the existence of a distinctly working class interest. This attitude, if not a necessary, was a perfectly natural result of the social philosophy held by a large proportion of the membership of the union.

The Furniture Workers' Union inherited strong socialistic tendencies. As has already been shown, the labor movement in this industry was strongly socialistic during the '50's, and the membership, which was still very largely German, retained the social philosophy of the earlier period. Besides this fact, it must be noted that the cabinet makers of Germany were mostly socialists, so that the recruits from this source added to the socialistic doctrines taught by Kriege, Weitling, Weydemeyer, and others during the earlier period. These socialistic views came out particularly in regard to two questions,—namely, the use of

³² *Furniture Workers' Journal*, June 19, 1885, p. 1.

³³ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Jan. 1, 1888, p. 4.

machinery and the ultimate purpose of the whole trade union movement. Many of the evils of the industry, such as low wages, excessive competition, and the like, were attributed to the wide spread use of machinery and the extreme division of labor made possible by its use. There was no disposition to deny the social benefit of machinery, but there was a strong feeling that the benefits were not justly shared by the individuals of the community. The solution in minds of many of the workmen was clear. "By placing machinery, like all other means of labor, within the reach and into the possession of *those who are using them*; or, better, into the *collective possession of all*, in order to enable the workman to participate in the blessings produced by labor-saving machinery and increased production of commodities of every kind," the evils would be removed, and the conclusion from this was that socialism was the ultimate aim of the labor movement.³⁴ This view cannot be expressed better than in the words of the editor of the Journal, when he said: "A great many members of trade unions, after having belonged to an organization for years, have not yet conceived that a union is more than a mere machine for the purpose of getting higher wages or for presenting the reduction wages Let us hope that the masses of workmen may soon be convinced that it is not the only mission of the organization of labor to raise wages and to prevent their reduction, but that by them the continuous war for what belongs to labor—the fruit of its toil—shall be done away with altogether. And if they are thus enlightened, they will no longer prevent and hamper the development of organizations by striving for temporary and comparatively small individual gains. They will no longer prevent each other from exerting themselves to the utmost to accomplish the great aim—the *possession by labor of the means of production, machinery, etc.*, in order to no longer be dominated over and kept in misery and want."³⁵ The most complete and formal statement of the socialistic tendencies of the union is to be found in the declaration of principles, the acceptance of which was

³⁴ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, May 8, 1885, p. 1. Italics are mine.

³⁵ *Furniture Workers' Journal*, Nov. 6, 1885. Italics are mine.

made a condition of amalgamation with the Machine Wood Workers and is still retained in the constitution of the Amalgamated Union.³⁶

³⁶ Cf. *Declaration of Principles, Const. A. W. W. I. U.* (Revised, 1904).

These principles were formulated by a committee composed of B. Kaufmann, New York No. 7, W. F. Staehle, Brooklyn No. 8, and E. Emrich, who was Secretary of the Executive Committee. These principles continued to be the expression of the prevailing opinion, as shown by the following resolution, passed by the Ninth Convention in September, 1894:

Whereas, A permanent transformation of this social system, which exists for the benefit of a few and the detriment of the many, can only be brought about by independent political action of the wage working class, therefore be it

Resolved, That the 9th Convention of the International Furniture Workers of America call upon its members to turn their backs upon all capitalist, hoodle parties, and wherever possible to attach themselves to an independent labor party, based upon the platform of the Socialist Labor party, and to be active in this direction. *Möbel-Arbeiter Journal*, Sept. 26 and Oct. 10, 1884. Also *Protokoll des sechsten Conventions*.

CHAPTER VII

THE INDUSTRIAL POLICIES (continued)

THE AGGRESSIVE POLICY OF THE UNION

It has been shown that the limits of enforcing the agreement are determined by the good faith of the contracting parties. When these limits have been reached, relations are usually broken off, although Wood Workers developed an arrangement with the Planing Mill Association of Chicago for settling trade disputes, but this arrangement furnished only a voluntary method of interpreting the terms of the agreement, and while it prevented friction, and fostered the spirit of give and take, it did not provide any coercive authority. Hence when the limits of enforcing the agreement have been reached, both sides are forced to take up an aggressive policy. The union has two aggressive weapons, namely, the boycott and the strike. The boycott is frequently used, not only against firms with which the union has had an agreement, but also against those firms which refuse to recognize organized labor. The purpose in each case is to make it financially advantageous for the firms to recognize the union, and to adopt the union scale. The boycott was employed by the Furniture Workers, and also by the Machine Wood Workers prior to the amalgamation of these two organizations, and is still in use by the Amalgamated Union. The policy has been to publish a list of "unfair shops," and to influence as far as possible the demand for the product of non-union shops. The union has also published regularly a list of "fair shops," thus advertising the union made material. Where the fight has been of long duration, the union has appealed to the American Federation of Labor, and has had the hostile firm placed upon the "We don't Patronize List" of that organization. The boycott has sometimes

been a very effective weapon in assisting the union to win its case.¹ The decision for the Supreme Court against the legality of the boycott, has had a tendency to limit its use.² Whether the union will extend the use of the "fair list" and thus accomplish the same end in a slightly different way remains to be seen.

Whenever the union has had an agreement with a firm, both the boycott and the strike have been used as coercive weapons. It has been the policy of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Union to use the strike, only as a last resort, and to declare in favor of arbitration in the settlement of labor disputes. But when attempts at arbitration have failed, the Wood Workers have followed what is now generally recognized as a legal right, namely, to strike. The character of a union is very well indicated by its regulations for ordering and managing a strike. In fact, the strength of an organization and its effectiveness as a means of improving the conditions of labor depend in a large degree upon the management and control of its fighting power. Experienced labor leaders of all unions are constantly emphasizing and urging upon the membership the need for large reserve funds, as a necessary aid in obtaining favorable agreements.³ However, the accumulation of large strike funds may stimulate among the local unions the desire to participate in strike benefits, and if the locals were left entirely free to call strikes it would be very difficult to maintain a defense fund, for the local unions, actuated by selfish motives could soon dissipate these funds and injure permanently the interests of the organization

¹ The two most important cases are the Quincy Show Case strike, and the Royal Mantle and Furniture Company of Rockford, Ill. In each case the trouble was of long duration, and the boycott was used effectively. The former firm finally granted the union demands. Cf. *I. W. W.*, Jan. 1896, p. 81; May, p. 129; Jan., p. 227; Feb., p. 240; July, p. 7; Oct., p. 38, 1897; Feb. 1898, p. 92; Jan. 1899, p. 8; April 1900, p. 45. The latter firm changed its business, it was asserted on account of the union fight. *I. W. W.*, Feb. 1898, p. 94.

² Cf. *U. S. Bul. of Labor*, Nos. 74: 246-54; 80: 124-138; 83: 169-179. Also for *Danbury Hatters Case*. *N. Y. Bul. Lab.* No. 36, p. 66-76. *Amer. Federationist*, Vol. 15, 180-199.

³ It is interesting to note the similarity in the arguments used by the trade unionist, defending an aggressive policy, as the best means of promoting industrial peace, to that used in defense of the policy of expanding the navies of the world, as a means of promoting international peace.

as a whole. In order to guard against this wasting of union resources, and to protect the larger interests of the union, there has been a gradual centralizing of the control of strikes into the hands of the international officials. The right to originate a strike in the Amalgamated Union rests, in the first instance with the local union, unless the local is affiliated with a wood workers' council, in which case the authority is vested in this body. But in either case, before a strike can be legally called, an application must be submitted to the general council and approved by that body.⁴ The purpose of this regulation is to give the general officers a veto power over the local union in the matter of calling strikes, and to enable them to prevent the weaker unions from dissipating the energies of the whole organization on what has been called "Hurrah Strikes," and at the same time to enable them to harmonize the policy of the union from a broader point of view. Experience has shown that newly organized locals are much more likely to be influenced by enthusiasm, and to strike before the question has been given thorough consideration, than are locals that have had some real union experience. Such action is almost sure to involve the financial strength of the entire organization.

The regulation requiring the approval of the general council was not sufficient to prevent violations of the law, as may be seen from the statement of the general secretary to the convention in 1904, in which he complained that most of the strikes which had occurred during the period covered by the report, had been declared in open violation of the laws of the union, and he recommended that in case "of unions declaring strikes without consent the general council should be instructed to pay no benefits to strikers whatsoever."⁵ This recommendation was incorporated into the constitution and is the only disciplinary power which the general council can exercise in case of a violation of the law, but according to the present officials the regulation has tended to check open violation of this regulation.

Whenever a dispute arises between a local union and an em-

⁴ *Constitution*, Sect. 122.

⁵ Secretary's report, *Proceedings of Third Annual Convention*, p. 22-23. Report covered the years from January 1900 to Dec. 1903.

ployer, the local is required to make an effort to settle the dispute by voluntary arbitration. But in case this effort fails, the local may then prepare to strike. Before the strike can be ordered, the membership of the local that are in good standing must be notified to attend a meeting for the purpose of considering the advisability of a strike. After free discussion of the question, if three-fourths of the members present vote by secret ballot in favor of a strike, it may be ordered as soon as authority has been received from the general council.⁶ Should the strike affect two or more locals, the membership of all the locals within the district affected, must be summoned to a mass meeting, and, if the necessary three-fourths vote in favor of striking, application may be made for the approval of the general council. Wherever a Wood Workers' Council is in existence, this council will take charge of the larger disputes, but in every case, the sanction of the general council must have been received.

Once a strike has been ordered, the management of the struggle is placed in the hands of a strike committee. This committee is appointed by the local, or by the wood workers' council, or in case a council does not exist, by a conference of the locals affected by the strike. This committee marshals the union forces and carries on all the negotiations with the employer. In case of a protracted struggle an appeal is usually made to the general officers for assistance in the management of the strike. One of the principal duties of this committee is to prevent the members from deserting the cause, and to raise funds for the support of the struggle. The strike benefits paid by the Amalgamated Union are forwarded to some member of this committee, who has been delegated to receive these funds. This member is placed under bond, a duplicate of which is filed with the secretary of the Amalgamated Union. All members on a duly authorized strike are entitled to strike benefits from this fund, and when the fund becomes exhausted, the Executive Council has the authority to levy an assessment of 25 cents per month upon every member of the organization,⁷ except those on legally authorized strikes.

⁶ *Constitution 1904*, Sections 124 and 125.

⁷ *Constitution 1904*, Sections 122-132.

The policy of the union toward sympathetic strikes is to permit the locals to act upon their own responsibility, but in so doing, they can in no way compromise the action of the general council, until the strike has been approved by that body.⁸ If the general council, after an investigation into the circumstances which led to the strike, is satisfied that the local acted with discretion in declaring a sympathetic strike, they may approve and the members may be put on benefits. But the general council has authority to declare such a strike off at any time, if it is thought advisable, in which case the members will no longer receive strike benefits.

THE OSHKOSH STRIKE

The two most important strikes, which the Wood Workers have had, occurred during the summer of 1898, one at Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and the other at Chicago. The difficulty in both cases was with the planing mill and sash, door, and blind firms of these cities. Altogether there were about 3,000 men involved in the strikes, 1,600 at Oshkosh and 1,400 at Chicago. Since the Chicago trouble developed after the Oshkosh dispute, and was in a way a result of that difficulty, the latter will be studied first.

The Oshkosh dispute grew out of a number of causes, the most important of which were the wage question, the employment of women and children, and the hostile attitude of the employers toward the union. For a number of years Oshkosh had been a center of the sash, door, and blind industry in the United States.⁹ Besides the sash, door, and blind industry, Oshkosh was a center for lumber and timber products, and a considerable quantity of furniture was also produced here.¹⁰ It had been frequently as-

⁸ *Ibid.*, Sections 133-135.

⁹ There was beginning to be some foreign trade, especially with England where a peculiar make of door was in demand, but this trade was relatively insignificant in 1898.

¹⁰ The volume of the industry may be indicated by the following table taken from the Twelfth Census, Vol. VIII, p. 968-971:

	Number of establish- ments.	Capital.	Men.	Women.	Child- ren.	Value of output.
Furniture.....	4	\$784,676	518	70	42	\$720,826
Lumber and timber product.....	7	2,752,450	1,624	6	152	2,449,430
Lumber, planing mill, sash, door, and blinds.	5	1,368,646	674	5	69	1,619,836
	16	\$4,905,781	2,216	81	263	\$4,790,092

served by rival firms in the Mississippi river towns and in Chicago, that the Oshkosh firms had an unfair advantage in competition on account of the low wages paid there. The Oshkosh mill men defended themselves by calling attention to an agreement which existed between the mill men that permitted the Mississippi river manufacturers to sell to the retail dealers at 5% higher than the Oshkosh and Chicago manufacturers, and that this was sufficient to explain the difference in wages paid.¹¹ With the workmen the wage question was a serious grievance. The wages had been cut during the hard times of 1893, and had not been increased, except in a few cases, up to the time of the strike, although the employers had promised an increase upon the return of prosperous times, which they claimed had not yet arrived. The labor leaders claimed that the mill men had promised during the political campaign of 1896 that wages would be higher in case the Republican party was returned to power, and the tariff was remodeled. The Republican party was returned, and although an increase of \$2.00 per thousand was added to the tariff on lumber, the wages were not increased, as may be seen from the following table:

¹¹ *Daily Northwestern*, June 13 1898. Quoted from the Mississippi Valley Lumberman of Minneapolis.

Classified Weekly Wages in the Sash, Door, and Blind Industry in the State of Wisconsin. (73 establishments).¹²

Weekly Wages	1896	1897	1898
	Number receiving	Number receiving	Number receiving
\$25 and above.....	11	7	4
20 to 25.....	25	21	4
18 to 20.....	36	56	35
15 to 18.....	104	102	113
13 to 15.....	133	121	121
12 to 13.....	221	230	264
11 to 12.....	39	59	125
10 to 11.....	245	277	376
9 to 10.....	420	415	501
8 to 9.....	341	278	350
7 to 8.....	492	492	528
6 to 7.....	560	756	768
5.5 to 6.....	104	33	55
Total.....	2,720	3,111	3,526

Firms affected by the strike and wages paid.

FIRMS.	ABOVE 18 YEARS OF AGE.						BELOW 18 YEARS OF AGE.					
	Less than \$1.00.	\$1.00 to \$1.25.	\$1.25 to \$1.50.	\$1.50 to \$2.00.	\$2.00 to \$3.00.	\$3.00 to \$4.00.	Boys and girls.	30¢ to 50¢.	50¢ to 60¢.	60¢ to 70¢.	70¢ to 80¢.	80¢ to 90¢.
Paine Lumber Co. (a).....	46	241	158	41	31	22	Boys.....	28	32	43	33	19
Radford Bros & Co. (b).....	6	51	20	26	10	1	Girls.....	15	6	4	1	1
Williamson & Libby Lumber Co. (c).....	7	65	29	13	4	.....	Boys.....	7	17	.....	7	.....
Foster & Hofner (d).....	4	73	29	10	6	.....	Boys f.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Morgan & Co. (e).....	.....	133	43	42	9	1	Boys.....	18	13	8	6	3
Gould & Co.....	82	me	n	Av.	\$1	.39.	Boys.....	3	7	7	9	6
							Girls.....	.....	.....	2	1	.....
							Boys g.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

(a) Table compiled from Report of State Board of Arbitration, 1897-8. Cf. p. 27-38. Daily Northwestern, July 16, 1898, p. 2, 7. Report for Paine Lumber Co. was for May 14, 1898; Saw mill men got 6¢ per hour. (b) May 11, 1898. Yard men got from \$1.25 to \$2.00. (c) May 16, 1898. Average wage was \$1.34-1. (d) May 14, 1898. Average wage \$1.31-1. (e) Average wage \$1.34-1; Boys 61-3 cents. (f) Average 55 cts. per day. (g) Average 60 cts. per day.

From these statistics it is clear that there had been a distinct downward tendency of wages in the establishments considered

¹² Wisconsin Bureau Labor Statistics, 1897, p. 615; 1898, p. 471.

¹³ The report of low wages was further substantiated by the reporters of leading Chicago daily correspondents. Cf. *Chicago Record and Chicago Dispatch*, August 10-16, 1898.

during the three years reviewed.¹³ The number of workmen in the higher wage groups had been reduced and the increase in the number of workmen employed had been in the lower wage groups. This conclusion is substantiated by reports of correspondents of Chicago dailies during the strike and also by the report of the Wisconsin State Board of Arbitration. Nevertheless the mill men asserted that they had made nothing since the panic of 1893, and therefore were unable to raise the wages of the workmen.¹⁴

The employment of women and children constituted another grievance. In those factories affected by the strike there were 355 boys and girls under 18 years of age, and quite a number of women, employed.¹⁵ The labor leaders asserted that women were employed at machines where the work was too heavy for them, and one of the demands which the union made was the abolition of their employment. The facts revealed by the investigations of the State Board of Arbitration showed that children under age had been employed in several of the factories, notwithstanding that the charge had been repeatedly denied by the mill men.

A third cause was the attitude of the employers toward the union. The mill men had resisted any attempt on the part of the union to introduce collective bargaining, hence they felt a real grievance, when it was discovered that the union was endeavoring to create a boycott against Oshkosh materials in England. The beginning of their grievance was in July, 1897, when T. I. Kidd, secretary of the Wood Workers' Union, had furnished the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of England with facts concerning the condition of labor at Oshkosh. This information found its way through the *Timber News* and other trade journals into the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, and it was announced that the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was discriminating against Oshkosh products. The *Daily Northwestern* denied, in an editorial, the statements furnished the English organization, and severely

¹³ *Daily Northwestern*, May 14, 1898.

¹⁵ No definite statistics could be found for the number of women employed, but the number must have been small.

criticised Kidd for furnishing statements that had no foundation with a view of inviting a boycott against Oshkosh materials.¹⁶ The editorial denied the employment of children and the payment of low wages. It further accused the labor agitators, who had visited Oshkosh of having had their expenses paid by rival mill men in other manufacturing centers. Kidd replied to the editorial, reaffirming his former statements concerning the employment of children, and the payment of "pauper" wages. He stated that the lowest wage paid an apprentice in Chicago was \$1.00 per day, while an apprentice might receive \$1.50 per day, and he asserted further that he had positive evidence, which was later corroborated by the investigations of the State Board of Arbitrations,¹⁷ that able bodied men were receiving exactly half the wages paid some of the boys in the Chicago mills. It was shown by the report of the State Board of Arbitration that at least 50% of the employes in every factory affected by the strike received \$1.25 per day or less, and in one factory the percentage was as high as 64%. If the maximum pay for apprentices in Chicago be taken, it will then be found that the percentage of men receiving \$1.50 or less ranged from 67% to 85.6%.¹⁸ These facts prove that Kidds' statements were no exaggeration of the actual conditions.

¹⁶ *Daily Northwestern*, Nov. 9, 1897; *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1897, pp. 53-55. The influence of the opposition in England to Oshkosh goods has been minimized by a member of one of the firms affected by the strike. However, this fact received considerable attention in the Oshkosh papers at the time. The gentleman referred to attributes the inception of the strike and its strongest support to the sash, door and blind factories of the Mississippi Valley in Iowa. He specifies particularly one prominent manufacturer who came to Oshkosh and made speeches urging the men to hold out.

¹⁷ Cf. note 13, p. 166.

¹⁸ Firms

	Per cent of men receiving \$1.50 per day and less.	Per cent of men receiving \$1.25 per day and less.
Paine Lumber Co. .	80%	53%
Radford Bros. & Co.	67%	50%
Williamson & Lobbey Lumber Co.	85.6%	61%
Foster & Hofner . . .	80%	64%
Morgan & Co.	77%	55%
Gould & Co.	Average wage \$1.39 per day	

These facts based on statistics from Report of the State Board of Arbitration. Cf. p. 112. Wages of apprentices taken from agreements in Chicago. Cf. *I. W. W.*, July, 1899, p. 75.

The *Daily Northwestern* then criticised Kidd's methods by saying, "It hardly seems reasonable that an attempt to impair the reputation and sale of Oshkosh sash and doors abroad is the best practical way to enhance the wages of Oshkosh workers." "It would seem to most people that the best way to enhance wages and give the wood workers more and steadier employment would be to encourage rather than to discourage foreign consumption."¹⁹ Kidd answered this point as follows: "The Amalgamated Wood Workers' Union has no desire to stop entirely the demand for Oshkosh sash and doors, nor does it believe that lessening the exportation of Oshkosh building material is likely to enhance the wages of the men. It does believe that it must show the mill men that it has power to do them harm if they will not do their workmen justice. Men are entitled to something else besides employment. They are entitled to wages. They are entitled to some of the comforts, yea, luxuries of life instead of a wage that makes the toiler only a producing machine. There is such a thing as illegitimate competition, and all competition is illegitimate that depends for its success upon child labor, women labor, and pauper wages."²⁰

This was the beginning of the trouble. The union leaders began actively to organize the shops. Agitation had begun during the first half of 1897, because the conditions at Oshkosh had hindered the progress of organization in other centers. But the real campaign was not undertaken until the first week of November, when T. I. Kidd and Richard Braunschweig held a series of five meetings, urging the workmen to organize. The agitation was continued through the winter months, and between 1,400 and 1,600 members joined the union before the strike was called. The union claimed to have 90% of the workmen under its jurisdiction at the time of the strike, a statement which has been denied by the mill men, who admit, however, that 75% of the men were not working, not all of whom were members of the

As was stated, there had never been an agreement between the union.

¹⁹ *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1897, p. 53-55.

²⁰ *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1897, p. 55.

mill men and the employee. After several months' consideration and acting upon the instructions of the local unions affiliated with it, the Oshkosh Wood Workers' Council prepared demands to be submitted to the managers of the "Big Seven" mills. These demands covered four points; namely, first, a minimum wage scale of \$1.50 per day, and a general increase of 25%; second, the abolition of woman and child labor; third, recognition of the union; and fourth, a weekly pay day with no more than three days pay to be retained on pay day.²¹ A joint mass meeting of all the unions of the city was held May 7, 1898, and the demands thoroughly considered. The demands were approved and submitted to the mill men May 12, 1898, and they were requested in respectful terms to report their decision by a specified time on the following Saturday (May 14, 1898).

The mill men ignored the demands of the union, and because of their refusal to reply to the propositions submitted to them, the strike was called on May 16, 1898. For 14 weeks the union was engaged in a struggle which tried its strength to the utmost. It was estimated that from 75% to 90% of the men in the factories were out on the strike. From figures given out by managers of the concerns to the Chicago papers, it would appear that mills were running with about one-fourth their usual force.²² So much depended upon the outcome of this strike that the officials of the union took immediate steps to marshal the forces of the union to the best advantage. The management of the strike rested with the local wood workers council, but T. I. Kidd, the general secretary, and Richard Braunschweig, a business agent of the International Union, arrived before the end of the first week to assist the local officers in the management of the strike. Mr. F. J. Weber of Milwaukee, a general organizer of the American Federation of Labor, reached Oshkosh early in the week to

²¹ In some cases these demands meant an increase of 100% in the wages paid. For a copy of demands cf. *Daily Northwestern*, May 14, 1898, *I. W. W.*, May, 1898, p. 125, and *Report of Wisconsin State Board of Arbitration*.

²² *Daily Northwestern*, May 16, 1898. These statistics were given out by the managers of the concerns to the reporters of the daily papers. The estimates were based upon the number at work on certain days specified, but probably represent a fair estimate of the actual number affected by the strike.

render assistance in the conduct of the strike. At one time President Gompers was called upon to intervene with the view of effecting a settlement. It was seen from the first that the strike would be a severe strain upon the resources of the union, and instead of paying the customary strike benefit, (\$5 per week), it was announced that \$3.00 per week would be paid to all strikers, and in order to provide funds for the payment of this benefit, three weekly assessments of 25 cents per member were made.²³ The financial strain was so great that the funds of the union were soon completely exhausted. The total cost of this strike to the union, including the legal expenses incurred in the trial of Kidd, was \$17,205.51.²⁴ The sum paid in benefits amounted to over \$14,500.²⁵ The experience of the union in this strike illustrated again the futility of attempting to carry on a large strike by means of assessments, and without an adequate accumulated defense fund. Under the circumstances it was impossible to accumulate a defense fund, because the dues were little more than sufficient to pay the running expenses of the union. It seems evident, then, that the hands of the officials of the union were tied from the beginning and that defeat was inevitable.

The Wisconsin State Board of Arbitration received notice of the pending trouble on Friday, May 13th, the day previous to the submission of the demands to the employers. All three members of the board²⁶ arrived in Oshkosh on Saturday. They had a meeting with the labor leaders and endeavored to prevent the calling of the strike, but without avail. On Monday the board endeavored to arrange a joint conference to be held in the presence of the board. The union officials agreed to this, pro-

²³ Some objection was raised against the action of the council in levying a weekly, instead of a monthly, assessment, for which the laws of the organization provided. The council defended itself by arguing that an extraordinary occasion made necessary extraordinary methods if the strike was to be successful. To satisfy those who protested, the council permitted the payments to be made monthly. Cf. *J. W. W.*, July, 1898, p. 5.

²⁴ *Proceedings, Second General Convention*, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁶ The State Board of Arbitration was composed of R. O. Jeardeau, T. Waddell, and R. H. Edwards.

viding bona fide employers should be sent to meet them, but the employers refused to agree to such a meeting.²⁷ The mill men were willing to meet the workmen as individuals, but refused to recognize the union in any way, and the strikers refused to confer with the employers, except through the officers of the union. The board continued its endeavors to bring the two parties together, and finally succeeded in arranging a conference on June 5, at which the officers of the mill men received a committee of the strikers, but nothing was accomplished because each side held tenaciously to its determination to refuse any compromise on the point of recognizing the union. The Paine Lumber Co. offered to take back the men when vacancies occurred "without consideration of union, nationality, religion, or politics."²⁸ The board met on June 6th and gave out a statement of their efforts to bring about a settlement of the strike. They stated that "the letter sent out by the Wood Workers' Council was courteous, and did not put the proposition in the form of demands, and that the employers were requested to make a reply before 6 o'clock on Saturday night." The statement reviewed the efforts of the board to effect a settlement of the strike, and that all attempts to arrange a joint conference before the board were failures, because the mill men were determined to ignore the demands of the union. In individual conferences the mill men assured the board that they would not discriminate against any striker. This fact was reported to the strikers, but no further suggestion was made.²⁹ It is evident from this account that the refusal of the mill men to deal with the union prevented all attempts at arbitration, or conciliation. The union officials were willing to meet the mill men at any time in the strike, on the one condition that the union be recognized.

The strike was continued for almost three weeks before there were any signs of violence or disturbance. The day after the strike was called the union issued an order prohibiting the members from congregating on the street corners, and from any at-

²⁷ *Daily Northwestern*, May 19, 1898.

²⁸ *Daily Northwestern*, June 3, 1898.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 10, 1898.

tempts to cause a public disturbance.³⁰ It was stated that during the first week there was a complete absence of crowds on the streets,³¹ but as a precautionary measure a number of special policemen were appointed on May 18th. This action was resented by the wood workers and they immediately drafted resolutions, expressing their protests against what they considered an unwarranted procedure.³² The union resented the appointment of the special police particularly because Mayor A. B. Ideson was Secretary of the Paine Lumber Co., and consequently his interests were intimately connected with those of the firms against whom the strike was directed. The unionists regarded this act as an undue exercise of his authority for the direct purpose of intimidating the strikers, and thus preventing them from improving their conditions of employment.³³ The situation, however, did not become serious or threatening until a report became current that the factories were importing non-union men. It was reported on June 2nd that the Radford Co., had imported a few men from Chicago, and immediately an ugly feeling was manifested. Ephithets were applied to men still employed at the mills. The non-union men had to be taken to and from their work in carriages by members of the firm, and special police were stationed at almost every mill to forestall any lawlessness.³⁴

³⁰ *Ibid.* May 17, 1898.

³¹ *Ibid.* May 18, 1898.

³² The protest took the form of the following resolutions:

"Whereas, the Wood Workers of the City of Oshkosh, each and every one of whom are citizens and voters of said city, have seen fit to make a demand for an increase of wages. They have remained orderly, have caused no trouble and the city in no wise suffered from any action of our members.

Therefore be it Resolved, that the Wood Workers of Oshkosh, in mass meet-assembled, respectfully protest against the ostensible purpose of preserving the public peace, when it is in no way endangered. The striking Wood Workers are orderly and well behaved and we consider the appointment of said special policemen entirely uncalled for, besides being a useless expenditure of the people's money. Hence, we respectfully request the Mayor and the Common Council of the City of Oshkosh to dispense with the men recently added to the police force, as their appointment is unprecedented and unwarranted, and not in the slightest degree necessary for the preservation of law and order." *Daily Northwestern*, May 18, 1898.

³³ One of the aldermen explained that the additional police were appointed to guard city against tramps and crooks that might flock to the city during the strike. *Daily Northwestern*, May 18, 1898.

³⁴ *Daily Northwestern*, June 2, 1898.

The first arrest for intimidation was made on the eighth of June, but no serious outbreak occurred until two weeks later. Thus it may be seen that for five full weeks, there was no serious disturbance or outbreak.

At the end of the third week the business interests of Oshkosh, particularly the merchants, began to feel the influence of the conflict. This fact led to an appeal made by the Retail Merchants Protective Association of Oshkosh for a harmonious settlement of the dispute. At a special meeting on June 11th, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

“Whereas, a strike has been instituted by the Machine Wood Workers’ union, and,

Whereas, the same is detrimental to the business interests and general welfare of the City of Oshkosh; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Retail Merchants Protective Association request that the manufacturers and the union have their difficulties settled at as early a date as possible on a just and equitable basis, both to the employer and the employee.

Further resolved, that we believe that both employers and employees have the best interests of the City of Oshkosh at heart, and we believe their differences will be speedily and satisfactorily settled, and will endeavor to use all honorable means for the termination of the same.”³⁵ Attached to these resolutions were the signatures of 225 Oshkosh merchants, including grocers, meat dealers, bakers, and representatives of other classes of trade. However, the appeal made to the loyalty of the conflicting parties had little or no effect in settling the dispute.

The only serious outbreak during the strike occurred on the 23rd of June, when a riot was started around the plant of J. McMillen. Early in the afternoon there had been a brief conflict around the plant of Morgan & Co., but the crowd dispersed. Later they gathered around the gate of McMillen’s plant, and it is claimed that a stream of water was turned on the crowd to disperse them, and that trouble began immediately. In the riot that followed an engineer, named Edward Casey, an employee of the firm, struck a young wood worker by the name of James

³⁵ *Ibid.* June 11, 1898.

Morris, and as a result of the blow, Morris died shortly afterward. The death of young Morris created a strong revengeful feeling, and intense excitement prevailed for a time. The city was turned over to Sheriff Lampert, who immediately telegraphed Governor Schofield for state troops. By the next morning two companies of infantry, a battery of artillery with gatling guns, and a squadron of cavalry had arrived from Milwaukee. Besides the militia, about 300 deputy sheriffs were sworn in. The militia was kept in Oshkosh only a week and without a conflict, although the strike was continued throughout the month of July. No further disturbance of any importance occurred until the fourth of August, when there was a clash between the strikers and the police, but by this time the strike had worn itself pretty well away.

It was unfortunate for the union that the riot occurred for up to this time there had been considerable expression of sympathy with the demands of the strikers for better wages.³⁶ But after the riot, the employers made as much as possible out of the riot in order to alienate public sentiment, and a break developed among the strikers themselves. Some of the men now began to show a willingness to return to the mills. One labor leader is said to have stated that the strike could have been settled at this time by an increase of 15 cents per day without recognition of the union, or further consideration of the demands of the union. On Monday following the riot (June 27th) the mills tried to open. Morgan & Co. reported 30 to 35 men, Radford Bros. were unable to open. Paine Lumber Co. had about 100 men. McMillen & Co. had about 25 men on the 28th. Gould & Co. were unable to open. Williamson & Libbey and Foster-Hofner & Co. announced they would open after the Fourth. On June 28th T. I. Kidd had a conference with C. H. Paxton, manager of McMillen's, at which meeting a compromise was reached. The terms which were reported were as follows:

1. The union was not to be formally recognized, and the firm was left free to employ whom they pleased.

³⁶ This statement is made after an analysis of public statements as they appeared in the Oshkosh press during the time of the strike and I feel that it is substantially correct.

2. An increase of 15 cents per day for all employees, who had received \$1.50 or less. (It was later asserted that no increase was promised, but that the men were to return and work for a week or two, and if satisfied with the pay, they could continue).³⁷

3. Female labor was to be debarred from the factory. The firm had not employed women at the time of the strike, so this was no concession.³⁸

Kidd submitted these terms to a mass meeting of the strikers on Wednesday morning and they were accepted.³⁹

This was the beginning of the end. However, the remaining firms found difficulty in securing sufficient men to run their factories during all of July. It was estimated that the six firms against whom the strike was still directed had only about one-fourth of their regular force at the beginning of August.⁴⁰ It is clear from these estimates that, although the union was fighting a losing battle, the firms were unable to get enough men to run the factories. On the eighteenth of August the strike was called off against two firms—Gould & Co. and Foster-Hafner & Co.—after a committee of strikers had visited the mill men, and a verbal agreement was made, the terms of which were not made public. It was asserted that there was to be no discrimination against union men, that the same wages would be paid as before with no cut during the winter, and an increase “when the business picks up.” The strike was formally declared off on the 19th, after fourteen weeks of severe struggle. The union leaders admitted that the conclusion was not all that could be desired, but they felt that the employers had discovered in a way which they had never before appreciated that the workmen had interests and rights that must be respected. The leaders took comfort also in the thought that the strike had cost the mill men considerably more than a prompt acceptance of the demands which the union had made upon them.⁴¹

³⁷ *Daily Northwestern*, July 6, 1898.

³⁸ *Ibid.* June 29, 1898.

³⁹ One of the officials asserts that there was nothing but a verbal agreement, which was acceded to by the workmen.

⁴⁰ *Northwestern Lumberman*, August 6, 1898, p. 19.

⁴¹ *Daily Northwestern*, August 18, 1898.

THE CHICAGO STRIKE

While the union was in the midst of the conflict at Oshkosh a strike was called on the Mill Men's Club of Chicago. This Club was an association, formed in 1896, of the planing mill, sash, door, and blind manufacturers of the city. During the previous year the union had a closed shop agreement with the Mill Men's Club. There was a disposition among some of the members of this club to sympathize with the Oshkosh employers, and to take advantage of this situation to terminate their agreement with the union, and to declare for an open shop. To this extent the Chicago strike was an outgrowth of the strike at Oshkosh. However, the immediate occasion of the strike was the demand for an increase of wages. Although the strike was in the main successful, it was a mistake for the Chicago Wood Workers' Council to make a demand for an increase in wages at this time, for another strike would greatly increase the pressure on the already over-strained financial condition of the union, and militate against the successful conclusion of the important struggle already being carried on. The demands made were as follows:

1. A minimum wage scale of \$2.00 per day, and an increase of 25% and 30% in general wages;
2. A nine hour day;
3. And that the engineers and shipping clerks should be members of the union.⁴²

The employers decided to lock the men out on the evening of June 16th, and announced that on the following Monday, June 20th, the factories would become open shops, and if the present workmen desired to retain their position, they must resign from the union. In order to forestall a lockout the labor leaders called the men out on the morning of June 16th. There were about 1,400 men involved in the struggle that followed. The carpenters came to the assistance of the Wood Workers by refusing to handle material coming from unfair shops. The policy adopted by the union for conducting the strike was to maintain a boycott against the material from two or three firms until

⁴² *Daily Northwestern*, June 15, 1898.

they were willing to sign the agreement. The employers attempted to enjoin the Wood Workers from boycotting their material, but without success. The strike was continued through June, July and August, and in fact during the remainder of the year against some of the unfair shops. The mill men finally began to break among themselves, and one by one they signed the agreement for a nine hour day and a minimum wage scale of \$2.00 per day. The union reported on January 1st, 1899, that agreements had been signed in 60 of the principal factories and shops of the city.⁴³ In this way the strike wore itself away, and new agreements were signed by individual firms.

THE WOOD WORKERS' CONSPIRACY CASE

Growing out of the Oshkosh strike was a conspiracy case of more than usual significance. The employers had persistently refused to have any dealings with the workmen through their organization. They resented particularly the presence of T. L. Kidd and his influence upon the strikers, and hence they were anxious to secure some action against him which would rid them of his presence in Oshkosh. At first an attempt was made to secure an injunction against the union, but none of the Oshkosh judges would issue such an order. The next attempt was to secure Kidd's arrest. On August 6th an order was issued against Thomas L. Kidd, George Zentner and Michael Troiber, charging them with conspiracy to injure the business of the Paine Lumber Company. T. L. Kidd was the general secretary of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union. George Zentner was a member of one of the local organizations of Oshkosh, and during the strike was captain of the pickets, and Michael Troiber was a member of one of the local unions and was charged with having committed, while on picket duty, an assault and battery on a laborer, who was returning from one of the mills. Kidd and Zentner promptly furnished bail, but Kidd was arrested again on a second warrant, after it was too late to secure bail, and was kept over Sunday in the possession of the

⁴³ *L. W. W.*, January, 1899, p. 1. Cf. also *L. W. W.*, March, 1899, p. 32.

sheriff. The first warrant was sworn out by Nathan Paine, a stockholder in the Paine Lumber Co., and the second by the Paine Lumber Co. It was asserted that the company had fourteen additional warrants for Kidd's arrest, the object being to exhaust his means of furnishing bail. After a visit to Chicago, Kidd returned to Oshkosh and went immediately to the sheriff, and asked to have all warrants served on him at once. But there were no more papers in the hands of the sheriff to be served.⁴⁴

The preliminary trial was held August 15th, and lasted three days, and resulted in the defendants being bound over for trial at the October term of court.⁴⁵ Under the laws of Wisconsin no indictment was necessary, but the defendants were brought to trial upon a complaint filed by the district attorney. The case was tried before A. H. Goss, judge of the municipal court of Oshkosh. It was prosecuted by Walter W. Quartermass, district attorney, and F. W. Houghton, special counsel appointed to assist the district attorney. The chief counsel for the defense was Clarence S. Darrow of Chicago. He was assisted by Harry I. Weed and Earl P. Finch of Oshkosh. The trial occupied about three weeks, and resulted in an acquittal of the defendants on November 2, 1898.⁴⁶

The state tried to prove a conspiracy to injure the Paine Lumber Company, and in order to do so the prosecution brought four counts against the defendants.

1. That the defendants, together with other "evil disposed persons" had wilfully and maliciously combined, etc. to wilfully and maliciously injure the Paine Lumber Co. by hindering and deterring its employees from engaging and continuing in employment, and by impeding the regular operation of its business.

2. That the defendants had wilfully and maliciously combined to compel the Paine Lumber Co. to do certain acts against its will; namely, to abolish female labor in its wood working fac-

⁴⁴ *I. W. W.*, Aug. 1898, p. 17.

⁴⁵ *Daily Northwestern*, August 6, 1898. For the charge against Kidd, Zentner and Troiber.

⁴⁶ *The Wood Workers' Conspiracy Case*, (by Clarence Darrow), page 3.

tory; to recognize the union; and to employ only members in good standing in that organization.

3. That the defendants had wilfully and maliciously combined to prevent the Paine Lumber Co. from doing certain lawful act, namely, to employ women and girls and to hire other than members of the union in the conduct of its business.

4. That the defendants had wilfully and maliciously combined to prevent certain specified persons from engaging in lawful work for the Paine Lumber Co.⁴⁷

Judge Goss in his charge to the jury, first explained the common law doctrine of conspiracy, and then applied it to the case before the jury. He stated that there was evidence in this case tending to prove that something like 1,600 men had combined in this strike, then his argument proceeded as follows:

"It is claimed on the part of the defendants that the object of such association was for the purpose of bettering the condition of the laboring men. . . . and to assist the members in obtaining better wages. All of these objects are not only lawful, but under proper conditions laudable, and so long as they confine themselves to lawful means to accomplish such objects, it is the policy of the law and of society to protect and to encourage them. In the furtherance of such objects they have the right to solicit membership, ask persons to join and assist them in their cause, and to agree among themselves upon the conditions under which they will work. They have the right, individually and collectively, to refrain from working, if they do not violate existing contracts, and if in furtherance of such objects they should all refrain from work, and the employers, because of their inability to obtain employees, be obliged to close their institutions, and are thereby injured as an incident merely to such action on the part of the workmen, the law will not interfere, because the workmen are doing what they have a lawful right to do. But if at any time they change their lawful objects. . . . or couple with their lawful objects the object or purpose of injuring another in his business, such as preventing another from conducting a lawful business," or to compel him against his will to do

⁴⁷ *U. S. Bulletin of Labor*, No. 23, p. 575-579.

certain acts such as those cited in the information, by "force, violence, coercion, intimidation or abuse. . . . then the character of such organization is changed, and. . . . it becomes a conspiracy which is not only prohibited by law, but is a dangerous institution."

He showed further that if some members of an organization conspired to carry out unlawful objects, it did not follow that all members were equally guilty, but, on the contrary, only those were guilty who had cooperated in the conspiracy. The same line of argument was used concerning the use of pickets. If the pickets were used for lawful purposes, and if they did not interfere with the rights of others in the conduct of lawful business, the defendants were not guilty of conspiracy.⁴⁸

The case went to the jury on November 2nd, and on the second ballot the jury was unanimous for acquittal, and the wood workers had won an important victory for organized labor. The influence of the case has been limited, because it was tried in a lower court and was never appealed, but it attracted a great deal of attention at the time throughout the country, and especially in labor circles. The importance attached to the trial among trade unionists may be seen from the way they responded to the call for aid in raising the fund for the defense of Kidd and his associates. Contributions were received from 286 local and labor organizations, representing 50 different trades. The cost of the trial to the Amalgamated Union was only \$535.73,⁴⁹ although the total cost was a little less than \$5,000. Of the large number of arrests which were made at the time of the riot around the McMillen plant, the employers were unable to secure a single conviction. The Paine Lumber Co. also was now willing to settle out of court a civil suit, which it had brought against Kidd for \$15,000 damages, on condition that he stop proceedings against the company for false arrest. While the union was victorious in these legal battles, it was after all an empty victory, for the union had sustained a heavy loss of membership during

⁴⁸ Cf. *U. S. Bulletin of Labor*, No. 23, p. 575-79, for the complete charge to the jury. That part of the argument applying to the right of an organization to strike and picket was more favorable to the defendants than was anticipated.

⁴⁹ *I. W. U.*, February, 1899, p. 17.

and after the strike, and while the conditions were improved somewhat, the union has never been able to regain its hold in Oshkosh. These same mills are now run as open shops, and the union membership there is confined to the custom shops.

CHAPTER VIII

JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTES OF THE AMALGAMATED UNION

The strength of the union movement has often been wasted through internal strife and conflicts between unions, which may be traced for the most part to the mistaken policies of over-zealous and ambitious labor leaders. These conflicts have usually grown out of disputes over the jurisdiction claimed by the unions. The wood working trades have furnished one of the most serious and bitterly contested conflicts of this kind which has yet developed in the history of the labor movement of our country, namely, the jurisdictional dispute between the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union. In order to understand this conflict and to throw light upon the nature of the trouble, a brief review of the situation will be presented.

Probably the first group of workmen to organize in the wood working trades was the house carpenters,¹ who were fairly well organized in all of the principal cities of the country during the decade from 1830 to 1840. The work of a carpenter at this time, and in fact until after the middle of the century, was confined to the construction of houses and buildings, in which he not only did all of the wood work, but in which there was no competing group of workmen. The cabinet makers, a kindred group of workers, were engaged in the main in the manufacture of furniture, and they also were organized as early as 1833. There was no marked difference between the work of a carpenter and that of a cabinet maker, except that the lat-

¹ Cf. p. 33. Miss Schaffner shows in her monograph on the Labor Contract from Individual to Collective Bargaining that the carpenters were organized in 1803, cf. p. 66ff.

ter was employed in factories or workshops, and usually did finer and more highly skilled work.

Here, then, were two groups of workmen engaged in the re-manufacture of lumber that did not enter into competition with each other. So long as this situation remained unchanged, nothing is heard of a conflict between organizations in the wood working trades. But with the successful operation of the revolving planer in the early forties, a disturbing factor was introduced. The economy in smoothing lumber, which was made possible by this machine, made it profitable to introduce other wood working machinery, the result of which was to transfer from the outside carpenter to the factory larger and larger portions of the work of finishing building material, such as sash, blinds, doors, door and window frames, and the like. This process of absorption appeared to the carpenter as a direct encroachment upon his field of work, but the fact that the transition took place at a time when there was no strong central organization in the industry explains the absence of open resistance on the part of the workmen to this industrial change. The carpenters made two unsuccessful attempts to found a national union after 1850, one in 1854, and the other in 1867,² but it was not until 1881 that they were successful in establishing a central organization that has had a continuous existence. In the meantime the cabinet makers had formed a national organization, and were making an effort to unionize the shops, particularly the furniture factories and the piano and organ works. This latter organization claimed for its jurisdiction all workmen employed in these factories, whether the men were working on the machines or with hand tools.

With the increase of specialization in the manufacture of wood products there was developed a new class of workmen, who were for the most part young men, and who were not affiliated with any organization, namely, the machine wood workers. The cabinet makers were the first to feel seriously the competition of this new class of workmen, and they began to admit them to membership in the Furniture Workers' Union. This action

² *Report of U. S. Industrial Commission*, Vol. XVII, p. 128.

later led the furniture workers to advocate an organization that would control all employes engaged in the wood working trades. The Carpenters' Union was formed by the outside house carpenters and was organized primarily in behalf of this group of workmen. They were not at first interested in the machine wood workers. As proof of this statement the following facts may be cited. At the convention of the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions in 1885 the legislative committee was instructed to use its best efforts to organize the wood working machine hands. Representatives of the Furniture Workers' Union immediately protested against any interference with the machine hands employed within the jurisdiction claimed by their union, and it was agreed that the resolution should be taken to apply to the workers "on sash, doors, blinds, wagons, etc."³ No protest was made by the carpenters to this resolution, although the organization was represented in the convention. There was nothing in their constitution, as revised in 1882 and again in 1884, which gave them the right to claim this field.⁴ But by 1888 a change had come in the policy of the carpenter's union, as may be shown from Secretary McGuire's report to their convention of that year. He reported three unions affiliated with the United Brotherhood that were composed exclusively of planing mill hands, and two more of sash, blind, and door makers.⁵ The attitude of the carpenters may be further indicated by a quotation from the secretary's report, in which he says:

"I maintain most firmly that while we should be ever ready to help all other sister labor organizations, and do practically recognize the common fraternity of interests that exists between all branches of honorable toil, yet, in the management of our own trade affairs, we should never make ourselves subordinate to any other organization, nor should we ever allow a dual form of organization to exist in our trade, for if we do, sooner or later, one will be bound to come into conflict with the other to the disadvantage of the working men's best interests."⁶

³ *Report U. S. Indus. Com.*, Vol. XVII, p. 130.

⁴ *Constitution U. B.*, 1882, Art. IX, Sect. 1; also *Const.* 1884. See Membership.

⁵ *Proceedings Fifth Gen. Conv. of U. B.*, p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 16-17.

That the above quotation expressed the prevailing opinion in this convention may be shown by the following incident. The furniture workers' union sent a communication to this convention asking for a mutual recognition of working cards, and the proposition was reported back by the committee on organization "that it was inexpedient to act."⁷ The same committee recommended that all treaties and agreements with foreign organizations "be annulled," and it recommended further that a charter be granted to the sash, blind, and door makers of Brooklyn.⁸ The full report of this committee was adopted by the convention.

It would appear then that in 1888 there were two international unions in the wood working trades, both of which were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and both were feeling the influence of machine production. One group of workmen had been continuously employed in shops and factories, but owing to the influence of machine processes, they had seen the lines of their trade shifting and had been forced to extend their organization so as to admit the new group of workmen. The other group had been composed primarily of outside workmen, but because of the changed industrial processes, they were also admitting to membership this new group of workers.⁹ Here, then, was the first conflict between two organizations in the wood working trades. That it had reached the stage of a conflict is proven by the fact that the International Furniture Workers appealed to the American Federation of Labor in 1889, to settle the dispute between the carpenters and that organization. The convention declined to interfere, and recommended "that organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, whose trades are so closely allied as are the Furniture Workers and the Carpenters and Joiners, should in each district adopt a code of working rules suitable to that particular district," so that such disputes may be avoided.¹⁰

It can be shown from facts presented by Secretary McGuire to

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27, 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29, 31.

⁹ In 1885 the membership of the U. B. was 5780, and in 1888 the number had increased to 28,416. There was an indication of a spirit of arrogance among carpenters at this time which is likely to emanate from rapid growth.

¹⁰ *Proceedings A. F. L.*, 1889, p. 74.

the Convention in 1890, that the carpenters became active in organizing the factory employees at which time there were 21 locals composed exclusively of planing mill hands, 3 of sash, blind, and door makers, and 5 of stair builders.¹¹ The Committee on Organization recommended at this convention "that bench hands join local unions of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners as now provided: that if they can consistently organize a local union of the U. B., composed exclusively of bench hands, it should be their privilege to do so;" and further, "In the matter of machine men, your committee recommend such legislation to compel machine hands, who are not carpenters to join machine hands' unions and where there is not enough machine hands to form a local union, they may be admitted to a carpenters' local, and their working cards be marked 'machine hand.'"¹² At this convention those sections of the constitution bearing on "membership" as revised in 1888, were consolidated and made to read as follows: "A candidate to be admitted to membership in this United Brotherhood must be a journeymen, carpenter, or joiner, a stair builder, mill wright, planing mill bench hand, or any cabinet maker engaged at carpenter work, or any carpenter or any journeyman running wood working machinery."¹³ Two things are clear from these facts, first, there was absolutely nothing in the constitution of the United Brotherhood down to 1885 that would give them a basis for claiming the machine wood workers, or in fact any factory employees. Secondly, that between 1885 and 1888 a change of policy had come about, and this change found formal expression in the constitution of 1890, which extended the jurisdiction of the union to factory wood workers.

This represents the situation in the wood working trades up to 1890, when a new and separate union was formed for the purpose of organizing the machine wood workers of the country. When this new union appealed to the American Federation of Labor for a charter in 1890, Secretary McGuire of the United

¹¹ *Proceedings Sixth Gen. Conv. U. B.*, 1890, p. 16.

¹² *Proceedings Sixth Gen. Conv. U. B.*, 1890, p. 48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Brotherhood objected, but later withdrew his objection.¹⁴ However, the carpenters continued to retain in membership locals made up exclusively of planing mill hands, machine men, and sash, blind, and door makers after the objection to issuing a charter to the machine wood workers had been removed.¹⁵ This situation led to the jurisdictional troubles between the carpenters and the machine wood workers, and in order to come to some working basis, T. I. Kidd, the General Secretary of the Machine Wood Workers, asked that their union be given exclusive jurisdiction over all machine hands and even the mill bench hands.¹⁶ The request was referred to the committee on organization of the United Brotherhood, and the report of the committee was adopted in full.¹⁷ This report became known as the Indianapolis Agreement, and it was manifestly the intention of this committee to grant the entire jurisdiction of machine hands to the Machine

¹⁴ Cf. *Downey Decision*, p. 200.

¹⁵ In 1892 McGuire reported 18 locals of planing mill hands, 2 of machine hands, or sash, blind and door makers, 5 of stair builders, 4 of car builders, 3 of mill wrights, and 1 of ship joiners. *Proceedings Seventh Convention U. B.*, p. 16.

¹⁶ *Proceedings Eighth Conv. U. B.*, 1894, p. 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42. T. W. W., June, 1895, p. 7. Report was signed by the following men: H. J. Hannan, Geo. W. Willis, Caston W. Conrad, and M. A. Maher. The following is the report in full:

"We, the Committee on Organization, having consulted the most active spirits in the following cities, viz.: Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, New York, Brooklyn, and Cincinnati, regarding the request of the Machine Wood Workers International Union, beg leave to report as follows:

"We find that the universal opinion of the representatives from the above named cities leads us to believe that it would be to the best interests of the United Brotherhood, and organized labor in general, that the Machine Wood Workers' International Union be granted entire jurisdiction over all mill hands, except carpenters who may at times be engaged at mill work, or as mill wrights or stair builders.

"In the event of a mill hand desiring to be transferred to the M. W. W. I. U. he shall be obliged to pay up all indebtedness to his local union, and the M. W. W. I. U. shall place him immediately in benefits of that organization.

"Should a mill hand's union be desirous of transferring to the M. W. W. I. U., it shall first pay up all indebtedness to the United Brotherhood, and be granted a charter and outfit complete, free of cost, and each member be placed immediately in good standing in that organization.

"We recommend that the United Brotherhood give this support to the Machine Wood Workers' International Union in assisting them to arrange their trade throughout the country.

"Mr. Thomas I. Kidd, General Secretary of the Machine Wood Workers' International Union, in behalf of said organization, agrees to the above propositions as set forth."

Wood Workers' Union. A further bit of evidence may be cited from action taken at this same convention. A petition had been filed by a mill men's union of Cincinnati, and indorsed by the District Council of Cincinnati, asking for the adoption of a union label, or stamp, for all union made mill work. The committee on resolutions reported as follows on this request:

"That in view of the fact that we have granted permission to the I. U. of M. W. W. an exclusive power to organize the mill men we recommend that this resolution and the subject of a mill men's label be referred to the I. U. of M. W. W."¹⁸

(Adopted.)

At the same convention another action was taken which tended to complicate the jurisdictional relations in the wood working trades. A cabinet maker's union of New York City was seeking admission to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. The committee on organization recommended

"that the said union be admitted to membership in this United Brotherhood on such terms and under such laws as the District Council and local unions of New York may adopt, and agree on with the cabinet makers' union No. 7 of New York, and as approved by the General Executive Board."

The report was amended in the convention so as to apply to all sections of the country and not to New York alone, and in this form it was adopted.¹⁹ Thus it is seen that the United Brotherhood had granted to a new organization the exclusive jurisdiction over the machine hands, and, in admitting to membership the cabinet makers' union, had adopted a policy which would lead to greater conflict between that organization and the Furniture Workers Union.

The next year the Machine Wood Workers and Furniture Workers effected an amalgamation, after several unsuccessful attempts on the part of the Furniture Workers to amalgamate with

¹⁸ *Proceedings Eighth Conv. U. B.*, p. 49. Also *I. W. W.*, May, 1895, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47. This was the Cabinet Makers' Union formed in 1859 and was the leading organization in the founding of the Furniture Workers' International Union.

the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. In the convention of the United Brotherhood in 1896 two resolutions were submitted which looked toward a refusal to recognize any other organization of wood workers. The substance of the resolutions was that no agreement be entered into with any wood workers' organization, and that all existing agreements be annulled.²⁰ The committee on organization reported unfavorably on both resolutions, and gave it as their opinion that "the general Executive Board should continue to make agreements with kindred organizations, when such agreements will tend to promote harmony and advance the interests of the United Brotherhood. Further, that no existing agreements be annulled unless the terms of said agreement have been violated by any party thereto."²¹

Notwithstanding this action of the convention a great deal of friction continued to exist in different localities between locals of the two organizations. In order to obviate this difficulty the Executive Boards of the two organizations, after two unsuccessful attempts²² finally agreed to the following amendment to the Indianapolis Agreement, which became known as the Agreement of 1897:

1. "The Amalgamated Union be granted entire jurisdiction over all mill hands, except carpenters who may at times be engaged at mill work, or mill wrights and stair builders.

2. The terms of this agreement shall not apply to those who are now members of the United Brotherhood, and who are employed in planing mills.

3. The United Brotherhood shall have sole jurisdiction over outside carpentry work, and the fitting up of offices and stores.

4. The card of the United Brotherhood shall be recognized by the Amalgamated Union in all planing mills and vice versa.

²⁰ *Proceedings Ninth Conv. of U. B.*, p. 48.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18. The Carpenters later asserted that the amalgamation of the Machine Wood Workers' Union with the Furniture Workers' International Union rendered null and void the Indianapolis Agreement.

²² Cf. *J. W. W.*, Aug. 1897, p. 14; Oct. 1897, p. 46, for proposed amendments.

5. Neither organization shall admit any expelled or suspended member formerly belonging to the other organization.

6. This agreement shall go into full force and effect when legally approved by the Amalgamated Union and the United Brotherhood.²³

This agreement emanated from the General Executive Board of the United Brotherhood. Although the wood workers felt that they were making a concession in ceding to the carpenters the right to fit up offices and store work which had formerly been done as a rule by cabinet makers, nevertheless the proposition was accepted by them as a means of maintaining harmony between the two unions.

Neither organization seemed thoroughly satisfied with the operation of this agreement, and the Carpenters in their convention in 1898 abrogated all agreements with other wood working organizations.²⁴ With all agreements abrogated it left the local unions to follow such policies as they saw fit.²⁵ The result of this policy was to bring about serious conflict between the two organizations. So unsatisfactory was the new relation that the matter came up for adjustment at the Grand Rapids Convention of the Amalgamated Wood Workers in March 1900. During the month of October, 1899, a conference was held between the General Executive Board of the United Brotherhood and Secretary Kidd, at which time it was agreed that a gen-

²³ *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1897, p. 56.

²⁴ The resolution which resulted in this action was similar to the one already mentioned in connection with the convention in 1896:

"Resolved, That it is the sense of this convention that no other carpenters' or wood workers' organizations of any kind be recognized by the Brotherhood, and that no agreement be entered into with other carpenters', wood workers', or machine hands' organizations by our general officers, and further that all agreements now existing be annulled."

A similar clause was included, applying to agreements with the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters. The report of the committee was adopted by the convention by a vote of 78 to 32. *Proceedings Tenth Conv.*, p. 63-64.

²⁵ The *I. W. W.* in commenting on this action said, "While the language of the resolution may seem a little harsh, yet we consider its adoption a step in the right direction, as it leaves our locals absolutely free to make such agreements with local carpenters' organizations as they may deem wise." Nov. 1898, p. 53.

eral officer from the United Brotherhood should be present at the convention of the Amalgamated Wood Workers, and, if necessary, a representative or representatives of the wood workers should attend the convention of the carpenters in August of the same year at Scranton, Pa.²⁶ In pursuance with this agreement Mr. J. R. Miller, a member of the General Executive Board, was appointed to represent the carpenters at this convention.²⁷ The whole question of the relations between the two organizations was gone over by the General Council and Mr. Miller, and resolutions were drafted and submitted to the convention for approval. The substance of these resolutions was that the Amalgamated Wood Workers should have sole jurisdiction over the employees of the planing mills, interior finish factories, and furniture factories, but the members of the Wood Workers' Union shall not be permitted to work on buildings, or in putting up store and office fixtures, except saloon, bank, and drug store fixtures, manufactured in shops under the control of the Amalgamated Union. The Carpenters on the other hand were to have absolute jurisdiction over all work on new buildings, and in putting up store and office fixtures, subject to the restrictions already mentioned.²⁸ These conditions were acceptable to the Wood Workers and the convention approved the report of the General Council. However, this action did not settle the question, and the wood workers sent three fraternal delegates to the convention of the United Brotherhood in August of 1900.²⁹ A

²⁶ *Proceedings, Second Conv. A. W. W. I. U.*, p. 19.

²⁷ The following were the credentials of Mr. Miller to this convention:

"Convention of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union of America, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Gentlemen:—This is to certify that the Secretary of our General Executive Board, J. R. Miller, of St. Louis, Mo., is hereby duly authorized to represent the interests of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, in conference with any representatives of your organization, who may be selected by your convention. We are in hopes that his presence may be effective in leading to some arrangement whereby our respective organizations may work together in the future with more harmony, and a better understanding in the various local unions than has recently existed.

Fraternally yours,

P. J. McGuire, G. S. T."

Proceedings, Second Conv. A. W. W. I. U., p. 37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁹ T. L. Kidd, *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1900, p. 129.

conference was held with representatives of the carpenters, in which the wood workers asserted that resolutions in harmony with those adopted by the Grand Rapids Convention were drafted and were to be submitted to the carpenters' convention.³⁰ The resolutions actually adopted by the carpenters were not satisfactory to the wood workers, because the convention simply ratified the action taken in 1898, and hence the warfare was kept up.

The conflict was then taken to the American Federation of Labor in 1901, when the wood workers brought charges against the carpenters for persistently violating the Indianapolis Agreement. The Executive Council of the American Federation heard delegates from both sides prior to the convening of the convention, but insisted that the two delegations get together and endeavor to reach a common basis of settlement outside of the convention, and for this purpose James Duncan, Secretary of the Granite Cutters' Union and also a member of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, was appointed to preside over the conference. After a lengthy discussion, it was evident that the conference could reach no harmonious settlement. Whereupon the wood workers presented a resolution asking that the convention should recognize the right of the Amalgamated Union to have "full and sole jurisdiction over the factory wood workers, whether employed in a planing mill, piano, cabinet, or interior finish factory."³¹ The wood workers made the claim to this jurisdiction upon three grounds. In the first place, they claimed that the International Furniture Workers' Union had had jurisdiction over cabinet makers, finishers, and machine wood workers; secondly, that the United Brotherhood, in the Indianapolis Agreement in September, 1894, had conceded jurisdiction over machine hands engaged in wood working factories to the Machine Wood Workers' International Union; and lastly, that the Machine Wood Workers' International Union was amalgamated with the Furniture Workers' Union on January 1st, 1896, for the purpose of uniting

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³¹ *I. W. U.*, Jan. 1902, p. 1, contains resolutions in full.

under one jurisdiction the factory wood workers of America, and therefore, the new organization should have for its jurisdiction that which was recognized as the jurisdiction of the two unions from which it was formed.³² The question was referred to the committee on grievances, which submitted the following report:

“Your committee finds that the agreement entered into between the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and the Amalgamated Wood Workers’ International Union has been violated by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and recommends to this convention that the Executive Board of each organization should meet together and endeavor to adjust the matter in dispute, and that the American Federation of Labor decline to take further action in the matter until such time as both parties have made a further effort to adjust the question involved.”³³

However, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor at its meeting in April, 1902, reviewed the situation, and decided that the Amalgamated Wood Workers had exclusive jurisdiction over cabinet makers and machine and factory workers.³⁴ With this authority in their favor the wood workers began an active agitation, disputing the claims of the United Brotherhood and calling upon all men employed in wood working factories to become members of the Amalgamated Union.

The carpenters went over the situation again in their convention of 1902. A special committee was appointed to consider the question, and this committee reported a number of counts against the Wood Workers’ Union. These complaints were that the members were working for less pay and longer hours than the carpenters; that they were organizing non-union men who had taken the place of striking carpenters; and in some cases it was asserted that the wood workers had furnished the scabs in the first place; that the organizers and business

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ Pamphlet—To members of the Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, p. 3.

³⁴ *Proceedings Twelfth Conv. U. B.*, p. 44. The meeting of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. was April 14–19, 1902.

agents were approaching employers with whom the United Brotherhood had agreements and offering to work longer hours and for lower wages on condition that the shop be given over to the control of the Amalgamated Union; that the wood workers were going outside to put up store fixtures and building trim; and that the Executive council of the American Federation of Labor, in granting jurisdiction of shops and factories to the wood workers had violated specific regulations of that organization.³⁵ The committee recommended that the carpenters reaffirm their jurisdiction over the workmen involved, and asserted that the country was not large enough for two organizations without injury to the craft. They declared the Amalgamated Union a scab organization and called for the revocation of their charter. They furthermore denied the right of the American Federation to recognize the jurisdiction granted by the Executive Council on April 14, 1902.³⁶

The question of revoking the charter of the Amalgamated Union came before the convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1902. The resolutions of the carpenters were discussed before the Executive council by representatives of both sides. The wood workers denied the charges made by the carpenters. With this evidence before it the Executive Council decided against a revocation of the charter of the Amalgamated

³⁵ *Proceedings Twelfth Conv. U. B.*, pp. 195-197. The basis for the carpenters' assertion that the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. had violated the regulations of that organization was this. That in accordance with a resolution adopted by the Detroit Convention, in order for it to be lawful for the Executive Council to take cognizance of a dispute, it was first necessary for representatives of the organizations interested to meet and endeavor to effect an adjustment of the dispute. Second for the Executive Council itself to determine a distinctive line of demarcation might bring about the very reverse of the desires entertained by the disputants. Therefore, that the A. F. of L. shall hereafter refuse to decide questions of jurisdiction, involving national or international affiliated bodies, unless by consent of the opposing interests, and with the understanding that each is willing to accept the decision of the A. F. of L. as a final settlement of the dispute. That these recommendations had been endorsed by the convention of the A. F. of L. held in Louisville, Ky. (Cf. *Ibid.* p. 184), and therefore the Executive Council had violated the law of the organization Cf. *Proceedings Twelfth Conv. U. B.*, pp. 195-197.

³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 195-197. The report in full was adopted without amendment. The committee was composed of the following members: George I. Robnen, John Weyrich, R. Fuelle, J. E. Henderson, and W. Loos.

Union, and asserted that the antagonism and disputes between the two organizations had resulted from a change in policy of the carpenters in regard to the question of jurisdiction.³⁷ and it recommended that the two organizations should meet in conference and endeavor to adjust their differences. During the discussion of the report of the Council, Mr. Kidd proposed an amendment to the effect that the convention "instruct the United Brotherhood to refrain from disrupting locals of the Amalgamated Union, and to recognize the right of the latter organization to sole and absolute jurisdiction over bench men, machine men, and finishers."³⁸ It was then moved that the entire question of the jurisdiction of the two organizations be submitted to a committee of eleven, five members to be selected by each organization, and these ten to select the eleventh. In case the ten were unable to agree on an umpire within two months from the date of the convention, then President Gompers should have the power to appoint. Both Kidd and Duffy

³⁷ Pamphlet: To Members of Labor Unions of United States and Canada, p. 4. "In the matter of the demand of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America for the revocation of the charter held by the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, we have decided against the revocation of the charter

"We have investigated the entire matter, both parties interested, presenting documentary and oral evidence, and it is plainly manifest that the antagonism and disputes have resulted from a change of policy regarding the question of jurisdiction.

"It appears that at the convention of the U. B. of C. & J. of A., held in Indianapolis in 1894, an agreement was made with the M. W. W. I. U. by which jurisdiction was given over certain branches of the wood working industry. Subsequently an amalgamation took place between the F. W. I. U., under the title of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, both of which had been affiliated with the American Federation of Labor by charter. The rights guaranteed under the agreement with the M. W. W. I. U. were maintained with the amalgamated organization, and subsequently, without the knowledge of the latter, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America abrogated the same. This course, we are of the opinion, was unjustifiable and cannot receive our approval.

"In this case we also are of the opinion that by the action of the Convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, the delegates were influenced, in demanding the revocation of the charter of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, by statements made to them bearing upon one side of the question, and we feel confident that a different conclusion would have been reached, if the subject had been thoroughly investigated and both parties in interest had been given an opportunity to be heard."

³⁸ *I. W. U.*, Jan. 1903, p. 131.

consented to this arrangement on the part of their respective unions, and the motion prevailed.

The arbitration committee met in Indianapolis on February 24, 1903.³⁹ After several ballots had been taken, Mr. P. L. Downey was chosen umpire.⁴⁰ The work of arbitration was begun on Friday, February 27th, 1903, and continued until March 11th, during which time documentary evidence was presented and discussed and the case was argued by representatives of the two unions. Mr. Downey rendered his decision on March 16th. He first reviewed the contentions of the two parties to the case. The wood workers based their claim on the Indianapolis Agreement, in which jurisdiction over machine wood workers was definitely recognized by the carpenters; and that the amalgamation of the Machine Wood Workers with the Furniture Workers, both of which had been affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, had carried over to the new organization the jurisdiction of these two unions; and lastly that the carpenters had recognized this jurisdiction in the amendment to the Indianapolis Agreement in 1897. Therefore, the Amalgamated Union was in no sense encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. The carpenters on the other hand contended, first, that their constitution gave them jurisdiction over all planing mill bench hands and cabinet makers engaged in carpenter work; second, that the Indianapolis Agreement in 1894 was illegal and contrary to the constitution of their organization, and that they had never surrendered the right to control machine hands and cabinet makers; third that the agreement in 1897, which was made by the General Executive Board, was not only unconstitutional, but had never been ratified by the district councils and local unions; fourth, in consequence of the evolution in the carpenters' industry, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters in their convention at New

³⁹ Pamphlet to Members of the Labor Unions of United States and Canada, p. v.

⁴⁰ The representatives of the wood workers' were: Thomas I. Kidd, Richard Braunschweig, George M. Guntner, Charles F. Gebelein, and D. D. Muleahy; for the carpenters: George Bohnen, J. E. Potts, John H. Clark, J. H. Browers and R. Fuelle.

Yerk in 1898, asserted control and jurisdiction over all mill wrights, planing mill, bench hands, and cabinet makers engaged at carpenter work, or running wood-working machinery, and that all contracts and agreements with other wood working organizations were declared off; that the convention of the United Brotherhood in 1900 ratified the action of the convention in 1898, and refused absolutely to recognize any other wood working organization, and claimed entire control of all men in the wood working trades. They argued that "once carpenter's work, always carpenter's work," whether done in the mill or outside of it.

In rendering his decision Mr. Downey stated that

"After a careful survey of the situation, and in accordance with the evidence and testimony produced, and in view of the fact that the Brotherhood of Carpenters did give the Amalgamated Wood Workers control over the wood working trades enumerated in the Constitution of the Wood Workers' International Union, I hereby decide that all wood workers in planing mills, furniture and interior finish factories come rightfully under the jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, but the members of the said organization shall not be conceded the right of jurisdiction over mill wrights, stair builders, or to work on buildings, or in the putting up of store and office fixtures.

"The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners shall have absolute jurisdiction over all work on new and old buildings and the putting up of store and office fixtures."⁴¹

⁴¹ Pamphlet, *Decision of Umpire in Jurisdictional Controversy, Carpenters vs. Wood Workers*. Mr. Downey gave the following grounds for his decision.

"It is plainly evident from the testimony presented that the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners deliberately violated all terms of the agreement made and entered into with the Machine Wood Workers at the Indianapolis convention in 1894, and by and between the executive boards of the Amalgamated Wood Workers and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in 1897, without consulting the officials of the Amalgamated Wood Workers, after the consolidation of the Furniture Workers with the Machine Wood Workers,

* * * gave the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union control

The carpenters refused absolutely to abide by the Downey decision, their motto now becoming "One Craft, One Organization,"⁴² and that organization was of course the United Brotherhood. They undertook an active campaign to extend their control over the jurisdiction which they claimed. The General Secretary reported in 1903, 59 locals with a membership of 7649, made up exclusively of cabinet makers, bench, and machine hands.⁴³ He asserted that in the two preceding years over 1500 members had joined the United Brotherhood, who had formerly been members of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Union. Such inroads upon what had been authoritatively recognized as their exclusive jurisdiction led the wood workers to bring the question to the Boston Convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1903. They demanded the revocation of the charter of the United Brotherhood for failing to abide by the Downey decision, unless it agreed to comply with the spirit of the decision by February 1, 1904. The carpenters presented two counter propositions. One, asking that the decision of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, rendered in June 1903, which upheld the Downey Decision and the claims of the Amalgamated Wood Workers, be annulled on the ground that it was an *ex parte* hearing because the carpenters had not been

and jurisdiction over all wood workers in planing mills, furniture factories, and cabinet makers and interior finish factories.

"No attempt was made by the Carpenters' Brotherhood to organize the above named trades in their organization, and no objection was offered by the representatives of the Carpenters' Brotherhood to impede the progress of the legal right of the Machine Wood Workers to the control of men working in mills, furniture or cabinet shops. Under this agreement the Machine Wood Workers devoted their time and money to the organization of the unorganized men in the mills, factories and cabinet shops, with the firm belief that the agreement entered into with the carpenters would be kept inviolate.

"Not until 1898, four years after the agreement was made, did the carpenters officially claim control of the trades under the jurisdiction of the wood workers. All agreements with the wood workers were abrogated, and without any official notification to the parties interested, the carpenters set to work to destroy the unions of the Amalgamated Wood Workers by offering inducements to the wood workers' local unions to desert their organization and affiliate with Brotherhood of Carpenters. Not a particle of evidence was produced to show that the Amalgamated Wood Workers did at any time violate any section or part of the contract entered into with the Brotherhood of Carpenters."

⁴² *Proceedings Thirteenth Conv. U. B.*, p. 26.

⁴³ *Report of Secretary of U. B.*, 1903, p. 12.

notified to appear and present their reasons for refusing to abide by the said decision and that Secretary Kidd in his capacity as a member of the Executive Council was present and had presented the case of the Amalgamated Wood Workers. And second, that the Amalgamated Wood Workers had acted unfair and subversive to the best interests of organized labor by making an agreement with the Manufacturing Wood Workers Association of Bronx and Mt. Vernon, N. Y. thus taking the place of striking carpenters. And that the agreement provided for a nine hour day in the place of an eight hour day which had been previously established by the United Brotherhood, thus directly violating the regulations of that organization and the instructions of the last Boston Convention of the American Federation of Labor held in 1890.⁴⁴ The question was taken up by the grievance committee, which heard the claims of each party, and after a summary of the whole situation, the committee recommended "that the American Federation of Labor ratify the decision of Mr. P. J. Downey," . . . and "that the decision in the case be sustained and enforced in all localities in which the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union has now established, or in which it may hereafter establish actual organ-

⁴⁴ *Proceedings Twenty-third Conv. A. F. of L.*, p. 85, 136, 241-3. In the report of the Executive Council reference is made to a letter from Secretary Duffy of the U. B. in which he claimed that his union had not agreed to abide by the award of an arbitrator, but had merely agreed to submit the entire question of jurisdiction to this committee for adjustment. The Executive Council contended that the agreement to submit the matter to a committee involved the willingness to abide by the award of such a committee, and in rendering its decision the position of the Executive Council was simply this, "that the two organizations in question having through their representatives agreed to refer to a committee and an arbitrator the questions in dispute between them, and the arbitrator having rendered an award, we have simply insisted that the award be binding upon both parties." The Executive Council contended further, if an appeal be taken and allowed in this case, that it was not a question of the right to appeal from the decision of the Executive Council, "but whether an appeal can properly be taken from the award of an arbitrator. Even if such an appeal is admissible, the parties whom it affects should abide by the award pending such an appeal or decision." In regard to the accusation of unfraternal acts on the part of the Amalgamated Wood Workers, the Executive Council stated that the latter organization contended that the acts complained of were retaliatory and resulted from the refusal of the U. B. to live up to the award, and the Executive Council gave it as their opinion that scrupulous enforcement of the award by the U. B. would lead to a cessation of these unfraternal acts. *Proceedings Twenty-third Conv. A. F. L.*, pp. 85-6.

ization."⁴⁵ After devoting nearly the whole of one morning session to the discussion of the committee's report, the convention concurred in the report by a vote of 8,243 to 3,315 more than one-third of the opposition being cast by the United Brotherhood itself. The carpenters again ignored this action and refused to abide by the decision. This refusal led to a conference between Secretary Kidd and President Mulcahy of the wood workers and Messrs. Duffy, Huber and Neale of the carpenters⁴⁶ for the purpose of bringing about a federation, whereby the cards of each organization would be recognized, but the carpenters took the stand that they could not recognize cards of such a "conglomeration of different trades" as composed the Wood Workers' Union, and a similar proposition failed to pass the 13th convention.⁴⁷

The next step in the history of this conflict was taken by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. This body instructed President Gompers to arrange a conference of an equal number of representatives from each organization, at which one or two members of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor would be present. The hope was that in this way an agreement could be reached that would be beneficial to all concerned. President Gompers suggested that the conference be held during the convention of the United Brotherhood in 1904, and addressed President Huber a communication to that effect. This request was referred by the carpenters to their committee on organization, which recommended that the General Secretary "communicate with President Gompers to ascertain information as to whether the Amalgamated Wood Workers had requested that such action be taken by this convention, and if the conference, as suggested, was intended to try to so amalgamate the Amalgamated Wood Workers into the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, so that but one organization . . . comprising all branches of the wood working industry . . . would hereafter be recognized by the Ameri-

⁴⁵ Pamphlet, *To Members of Labor Unions of U. S. and Canada*, p. 6. The report was adopted by the convention by a vote of 8,243 to 3,315, of which 1,000 were votes cast by the U. of B. Cf. *Proceedings Twenty-third Conv. of A. F. of L.*, pp. 243-6.

⁴⁶ Secretary, president and treasurer of the U. B.

⁴⁷ *Proceedings, Thirteenth Conv. U. B.*, p. 36-37, 185.

can Federation of Labor. And if an affirmative reply is given to the General Secretary, that this convention then instruct the President of the United Brotherhood to immediately appoint a committee . . . the same to meet with a like committee from the Amalgamated Wood Workers to arrange for said amalgamation of the Amalgamated Wood Workers into the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and that at least one member of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor be invited to attend said meeting, not for the purpose of arbitration . . . but for the purpose of giving such information as may be deemed necessary for the proper understanding, as to past actions of the American Federation of Labor in reference to said controversy, and what is to be expected by the United Brotherhood in the future."⁴⁸

Gompers replied by telegram that the Amalgamated Wood Workers had made complaints against the United Brotherhood for violating the arbitrators' award, and that the American Federation had sustained the same. But the Executive Council on its own initiative had authorized the letter to President Huber, suggesting the conference. That the Amalgamated Wood Workers had not requested such a conference, but had consented to one. Gompers gave it as his opinion that "the suggested conference, if held, should have full sway to bring about the best possible results. It should not be prevented or hampered by use of preliminary obstacles or technicalities of any kind. In the interest of labor and good name of our movement, your acquiescence is sincerely urged."⁴⁹ The committee on organization, to which this communication was referred, recommended "that further action in reference to this matter be deferred until such a time as it is evident that no spirit of prejudice exists, and that any committees that may be appointed would be able to bring

⁴⁸ *Proceedings Thirteenth Conv. U. B.*, p. 156. It was further recommended "that if an affirmative reply be received that the convention request a member of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. to appear before the convention to make such statements as will tend to harmonize the relations and bring about a more fraternal feeling for the continuance of our affiliations with said body." Cf. *J. W. W.*, Dec. 1904, p. 501. *Proceedings, 24th Conv. L. F. of L. P.*, 78-80, 219, 224, 233.

⁴⁹ *J. W. W.*, Dec. 1904, p. 501. Also *Proceedings, Thirteenth Conv. U. B.*, p. 267

about an amalgamation of the Amalgamated Wood Workers with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, as formerly requested.⁵⁰

The position of the wood workers was upheld by the convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1904, when it was recommended that "the Executive Council require the two organizations to comply with the decision of the Boston Convention (1903), or stand suspended until that decision is complied with."⁵¹ The Executive Council reported to the Pittsburg Convention the next year that this instruction would have necessitated the revocation of the charter of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, which "would neither accomplish the desired result, that is, compliance with the Boston Convention's decision, accord the wood workers the rights to which they are entitled under that decision, nor would the interests of labor generally be served thereby."⁵² However, the attempt was made at this convention to bring the two unions to a working basis. It was provided that a conference be held in Indianapolis on January 25th, 1906, between representatives of the carpenters and wood workers with President Gompers presiding.⁵³ The wood workers proposed in this conference that factory wood workers,

⁵⁰ *Proceedings Thirtieth Conv. U. B.*, p. 340-341.

⁵¹ *Proceedings Twenty-fourth Conv. A. F. of L.*, p. 219.

⁵² *Proceedings Twenty-fifth Conv. A. F. of L.*, p. 71-72.

⁵³ The provisions of the Pittsburg Convention were:

1. "That a temporary trade agreement be entered into by the General Executive Board of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and the General Council of the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union, to cover all men working in mills and factories.

2. That pending these negotiations, the officers of both organizations immediately notify all local unions under their respective jurisdictions to cease hostilities.

3. That duly selected representatives of both organizations shall meet at Indianapolis, Indiana, on January 25, 1906, and there and then endeavor to arrive at such a mutual trade agreement, understanding or amalgamation, as may by them be deemed of the best possible interest of the trades and crafts."

Carpenters: James F. Grimes, William B. MacFarland, Wm. D. Huber, Frank Duffy. Wood Workers: D. D. Muleahy, Richard Braunschweig, Thos. I. Kidd, Edward W. Miller.

Gompers was requested to be present in an advisory capacity. *Proceedings Twenty-fifth Conv. A. F. of L.*, p. 226-228. The representatives chosen were: For the carpenters, W. D. Huber, Wm. G. Schardt, P. H. McCarthy, and T. J. Sullivan; for the wood workers, D. D. Muleahy, John G. Meier, Thos. I. Kidd, and Richard Braunschweig.

who were members of the United Brotherhood, should remain such, unless they voluntarily transferred their membership to the Amalgamated Wood Workers, but the right to organize without interference the unorganized wood workers of the country should be conceded to the Amalgamated Wood Workers. They proposed that future relations between the two organizations should be left to the conventions of the two unions, but in order to promote better relations fraternally, delegates should be appointed to attend the convention of the other.⁵⁴ The carpenters rejected this proposal on the grounds that it did not provide for an immediate amalgamation, which, according to the action of the Milwaukee Convention, was the only action their organization could legally take. The wood workers pointed out the fact that the carpenters had made an agreement with the lathers since that convention, which, if legal, could be repeated with the wood workers.

The carpenters proposed a trade agreement between the two organizations to expire July 1st, 1906, at which time amalgamation should take place on the basis that all members in good standing in the Amalgamated Union should become members of the United Brotherhood, and enjoy immediately the rights and privileges of the latter organization, and be placed in benefits as provided by its constitution.⁵⁵ The wood workers rejected this

⁵⁴ Proposition in full was as follows:

1. "That all factory wood workers, now members of the U. B., shall remain such, unless they see fit to voluntarily transfer their membership to the Amalgamated Union.

2. The Amalgamated Union shall be conceded the right to organize, without interference, the unorganized wood workers of the country.

3. That for the purpose of establishing better relations between the United Brotherhood and the Amalgamated Union, fraternal delegates from each organization shall be elected or appointed, to attend the conventions of the other.

4. The future relations of the two organizations shall be considered by the conventions of the organizations." Cf. *Ibid.* p. 2. Also *Proceedings Fourteenth Conv. U. B.*, pp. 55-57.

⁵⁵ Pamphlet, *Report of Wood Workers' and Carpenters' Conference*, Jan. 1906. Also *Proceedings Fourteenth Conv. of U. B.*, p. 55-57.

The carpenters' proposition in full was as follows:

"That a trade agreement mutually agreed upon be entered into between the United Brotherhood and the Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union to expire on July 1, 1906, at which time amalgamation shall take place in the following way.

"All members of the A. W. W. I. U., who are now in good standing in that

proposal on the grounds that it meant absorption and not amalgamation, and that it was not in accord with the tentative agreement made at the Pittsburg Convention.

As no progress could be made in discussing these proposals, it was agreed that President Huber of the carpenters, President Muleahy of the wood workers, and President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, should constitute a committee to consider the matter in controversy and submit recommendations which would tend to facilitate the work of the conference, with the understanding, however, that it would require an unanimous vote to approve the report of the committee. After reviewing the situation, this committee recommended that the conventions of the two organizations should authorize their respective executive officers to arrange for a continuation or amendment of this or any other agreement, or to arrange the terms of amalgamating the two organizations, but any such agreement must be ratified by a majority of the membership of each organization to be binding. In case the proposal thus formed fails of ratification the officials shall meet again within ninety days thereafter to draft other terms, and to repeat this procedure, until a continuous working agreement or amalgamation is reached. In the meantime the officials of each organization shall co-operate to promote the mutual trade interests and to put an end to the hostilities against each other.⁵⁶ The representatives of the wood workers voted in favor of this proposal, but the carpenters were

organization, shall at the time the amalgamation takes place, be entitled to the following benefits, as prescribed in the constitution of the United Brotherhood.

"Those holding membership in the A. W. W. I. U. for one year shall be entitled upon death to \$200. A member who is six months in good standing * * * shall be entitled to \$100 in case of death.

"Semi-beneficial members, who are over the age of fifty at time of joining the A. W. W. I. U., or apprentices who are less than twenty-one years of age, who have not as yet served full time as such, shall be entitled to semi-beneficial benefits * * * which is \$50.

"Wife's funeral benefit is also to be governed by section 99 to 101 of the constitution of the United Brotherhood.

"That foregoing sections provide, in behalf of the members of the A. W. W. I. U. (those amalgamating) all the rights and privileges and benefits accruing to members of the United Brotherhood, for all other members the same laws shall apply that now exist between such members affiliated with the United Brotherhood." Cf. *Proceedings 14th Conv. U. B.*, p. 55-57.

⁵⁶ Pamphlet, *Report of Wood Workers and Carpenters Conference*, Jan. 1903.

opposed. President Gompers then submitted the following substitute:

"That the duly constituted international officers of both organizations shall within thirty days submit to their respective membership the following questions:

A. Shall the officers of the United Brotherhood and the Amalgamated Union arrange, subject to ratification, terms for the amalgamation of both organizations?

B. Shall a trade agreement be entered into by the officers of the United Brotherhood and the Amalgamated Union?"⁵⁷

The wood workers were willing to accept this substitute, but two of the carpenters refrained from voting, and in this way defeated the purpose of the conference.⁵⁸

At the Minneapolis Convention a plan for complete amalgamation of the two organizations within a period of two years from the date of the convention was submitted and adopted, subject to ratification by the two unions.⁵⁹ This plan was ratified

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3-4

⁵⁸ President Huber and T. J. Sullivan of the carpenters voted with the wood workers on the substitute.

⁵⁹ The provisions of the Minneapolis plan were:

1. Complete amalgamation within two years from November 1, 1906.
2. The officers, or their successors, and organizers of the Amalgamated Wood Workers shall supervise and manage the affairs of the Wood Workers' International Union until amalgamation takes place.
3. Wood Workers, such as are now claimed by the Amalgamated Wood Workers, shall, whenever practicable, be organized under a charter of either organization of their choice.
4. That wood workers and carpenters may join in mixed locals under the United Brotherhood of Carpenters in centers where there are not sufficient members to maintain a separate charter.
5. Local unions now attached to the organization interested shall remain in such affiliation until the consummation of the amalgamation.
6. In case of strike or lockout, involving the members of the Amalgamated Wood Workers, after vote is taken and approved to amalgamate, if the funds of the Amalgamated Wood Workers are sufficient to support their members in the trade controversy, the funds of the United Brotherhood shall not be called upon to defray said expenses; but if the funds be insufficient and the proposed trade movement or lockout be approved by the General Executive Board of the United Brotherhood, it shall be supported out of the funds of the United Brotherhood.
7. All trade agreements of the Amalgamated Wood Workers and the United Brotherhood in force on November 1, 1906, shall be respected and lived up to

by the carpenters, but rejected by the wood workers. It appears from the proceedings of the Norfolk Convention that the officers of the Wood Workers' Union had not kept that portion of the agreement, which required the general officers of each organization to recommend to their respective membership the adoption of the proposed plan.⁶⁰ The Adjustment Committee of the American Federation recommended to this convention, that the president and secretary of each union, together with President Gompers, should jointly recommend to the membership of each Union an amalgamation in accordance with the Minneapolis plan.⁶¹ This proposal was amended by Delegate McKinlay of the carpenters to provide for a meeting of the officers of the Amalgamated Wood Workers and the United Brotherhood together with President Gompers, and in this form received the support of the convention and the conflict remained as far from settlement as it had been for the past ten years. The wood workers insisted upon the recognition of the jurisdiction provided by the Downey decision, while the carpenters refused to consider any proposition which did not look to the complete amalgamation of the Wood Workers into the United Brotherhood.

The last stage of this long conflict begins with the action taken by the convention of the wood workers in March 1909. The carpenters had been invited to send delegates to this convention to meet representatives of the wood workers, and to-

by all concerned, except the clauses specifying members of the United Brotherhood or of the Amalgamated Wood Workers. New agreements shall not extend beyond November 1, 1908, the maximum period of this amalgamation. Members of either organization can work in shops where such agreements exist without violating this contract.

8. This agreement is subject to ratification by both organizations in accordance with their respective laws.

9. All hostilities of whatever nature between the two organizations shall immediately terminate, and be withdrawn as an evidence of good faith, without discrimination of the members of either organization.

10. It is herewith agreed that this plan of amalgamation be submitted and recommended for adoption to both organizations by the Executive Officers of each."

Signed: For carpenters, Wm. D. Huber, T. M. Guerin, Frank Duffy. For wood workers, D. D. Mulcahy, Chas. F. Gebelein, Richard Braunschweig. *Proceedings 62th Conv., A. P. of L.*, p. 209-210.

⁶⁰ *Proceedings Twenty seventh Conv., A. P. of L.*, p. 164.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 270-271.

gether with President Gompers, they should endeavor to effect an amalgamation. A few days before the date set for the conference, the Carpenters notified the Wood Workers that they would be unable to send delegates at this time. This communication was the immediate cause of the action of the convention in voting to enter no more conferences with the Carpenters which have amalgamation in view. The only basis which they will hereafter consider will be the recognition of the jurisdiction they have so long claimed, and future conferences must be with the view of establishing a working agreement. This throwing down the gauntlet means increased hostilities. The situation has been complicated also by two events occurring during the early part of 1909. At the January meeting, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor recognized the label of the carpenters for factory made building trim, which will come into direct conflict with the label of the wood workers. In the second place the wood workers so changed the qualifications for membership as to bring them into direct conflict with the International Piano and Organ Workers' Union of America, the International Wood Carvers' Association, and the International Carriage and Wagon Workers' Union. It would appear then that the union decided to take up an aggressive policy, and fight for its existence, a policy which will bring the union into greater difficulties than now exist. The fight was soon brought to a crisis in Chicago, where charges were preferred against the wood workers for taking the place of striking carpenters, and on account of these accusations the Wood Workers Council were expelled from the Chicago Federation of Labor. But an appeal was taken from this decision to the American Federation of Labor, and the appeal was sustained by this body. At the convention of the American Federation in the fall of 1909 the Wood Workers' Union was ordered to amalgamate with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, which indicates a complete reversal of the position that the American Federation had taken in this dispute during the first ten years of the conflict. To what extent this change may be accounted for by the attitude assumed by the last convention of the Wood Workers is difficult to say. But it is clear that since 1904 the Amal-

gamated Union has continually lost strength while the United Brotherhood has become one of the dominant unions in the American Federation.⁶² It would seem that the Wood Work-

Year.	U. B.	A. W. W.	Year.	U. B.	A. W. W.
1899.....	290	62	1904.....	1,554	283
1900.....	200	121	1905.....	1,432	290
1901.....	400	151	1906.....	1,627	150
1902.....	799	184	1907.....	1,929	93
1903.....	1,090	272	1908.....	1,796	40

ers stand small chance of winning against greater odds than have existed for many years past. They have been fighting a losing fight, notwithstanding the fact that their contention has been upheld by an arbitrator's award, and repeatedly sustained by the American Federation of Labor.

The life of the organization now depends upon the skill with which the officers of the union avoid conflict with other organizations, and yet maintain their ground in the fight with the carpenters. Present conditions hold little hope in this direction and the only hope of final settlement seems now to lie in the direction of amalgamation along the lines suggested by the American Federation of Labor.

What has been the effect of this long struggle on organization in the industries involved? It is impossible to measure the full significance of the fight, because much of it is personal and intangible. But it is clear that one organization, which had a membership in 1903 of approximately 30,000, has been reduced to just above 4,000 on January 1st, 1909. Has the other organization absorbed this loss of membership? The indications point in the opposite direction. The furniture factories have become practically non-union shops. The carpenters have, until recently, refused to admit furniture workers, or to become interested in furniture factories. In the February (1909) issue of "The Carpenter," the General President of the United Brotherhood for the first time called attention to the need for organizing these factories. The reason assigned at this time

⁶² This may be shown by the relative voting strength of the two unions in the A. F. of L.:

is the fact, as he asserts, that most furniture factories are prepared to manufacture building trim, and may thus come into competition with factory workers under the jurisdiction of the United Brotherhood. There has been a loss of organized labor also in those factories manufacturing office and saloon fixtures and billiard tables, etc. One of the largest concerns in this line, Brunswick, Balke, Collender & Co., a firm with branches in New York, Chicago, and a large, new establishment at Muskegan, Michigan, has for years operated under a closed shop agreement with the Amalgamated Wood Workers. The carpenters declared them unfair in 1906, because the firm would not make terms with the United Brotherhood.⁶³ The result has been that the shops have made agreements with the carpenters. Out of some 700 to 800 employees in Chicago, who were all members of the Wood Workers' Union prior to 1906, not more than 250 are now (May, 1909) organized. It is asserted that not more than 90 were organized in New York, and only those in the departments which employ the most highly skilled workmen.

The carpenters have not lost in membership in this struggle but it must have cost them large sums of money. The struggle has created a division in the organized forces in the industry, and has resulted in discrediting the movement in the eyes of the employers. Had the same amount of time, energy, and money been spent in maintaining harmony and a strong organization, both in and out of the factory, the cause of organized labor would have been better off. There has been an enormous waste of energy that should have been devoted to the improvement of the working conditions of the men who have had to support the financial burden of the fight. The course of the carpenters must be condemned for arbitrarily taking a stand, and fighting for this until the bitter end. There is no hard and fast line of jurisdiction in the industry to justify the tenacity with which they have insisted on controlling the entire field. The difference in the conditions inside and outside a factory is sufficient to justify with proper qualifications a cleavage at this point. The recognition of this fact would have made possible an agree-

⁶³ *Proceedings Fourteenth Conv. U. B.*, p. 343.

ment that would have conserved the interests of both organizations, and would have benefited all laborers involved.

The argument urged by the carpenters that their wage scale was endangered by the lower wage scale of the wood workers is one of little weight. So far as the carpenters used the argument of a higher wage scale as an inducement for the factory employees to join the United Brotherhood, it was an insidious argument. It can be shown from agreements which the United Brotherhood have made that factory employees receive very much below the scale for outside house carpenters. A good example of this is the Muskegan Agreement, by which the cabinet makers were to receive a minimum of 22-2/9 cents per hour,⁶⁴ machine hands 25 cents, and some as low as 16-2/3 cents per hour. These rates were materially below those that had prevailed for several years with the same company in Chicago under the Wood Workers' Agreement, where the minimum for cabinet makers was above 30 cents per hour, and other workmen in the same ratio. In other localities the minimum had been as high as 25 cents per hour for cabinet makers, which indicates that the workmen had not improved their conditions by transferring their membership. This fact is further indicated by a protest of a local cabinet makers' union in St. Louis, which had withdrawn from the Wood Workers' Union in 1903, and joined the United Brotherhood. The union made a complaint to the convention of the United Brotherhood in 1904, in which a protest was made against the treatment the union had received at the hands of the District Council in St. Louis. The union complained of two things. First, that in dull times the factories were made the "dumping ground" for the outside carpenters who were out of employment; and second, that an inside worker was not permitted to work on outside jobs, unless he "join an outside union and pay an additional initiation fee of \$20, no matter how long he had been a member of the organization." The protest was aimed primarily at this latter practice, and the

⁶⁴ Copy of Articles of Agreement between the Brunswick Balke-Collender Company and the U. B. of C. A copy of this agreement is in possession of the author and would have been included in this monograph except for space limitation.

union requested two things, namely, that they be given full control of the shops as had been the practice before the transference, and secondly, that cabinet makers be allowed the right to put up cabinet work made in cabinet shops. The committee on resolutions refused to comply with this request and recommended that the matter be left to the District Council to adjust, which meant that the request was refused.⁶⁵

The conclusion then seems evident, namely, that the crux of this fight has not been one for principle, in which the welfare of the workmen has been the dominating factor, but that it has been actuated by the personal element. The conflict has been a long, wasteful struggle that has been injurious to the cause of organized labor, and has benefited none. It will always remain as an indication of mistaken policy on the part of those who have insisted on waging the fight.

DISPUTES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Besides the jurisdictional trouble with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, the Wood Workers have had disputes of less importance with several other unions. The first of these to develop was with the International Wood Carvers' Association, an organization that was formed in January, 1883, and has held regular conventions since that date. It has always been a small union, claiming for its jurisdiction the wood carvers employed in various wood working shops. In 1896 the union adopted a policy of expansion and placed an organizer in the field. As a result of this move the union soon came into conflict with the Amalgamated Wood Workers. The dispute was taken to the American Federation in 1898 and it was thought that a satisfactory settlement was reached at that time.⁶⁶ But difficulties again arose and with the view of removing the friction between the two unions the International Wood Carvers invited the Amalgamated Union to send delegates to the convention of the former organization to be held in September, 1900. This con-

⁶⁵ *Proceedings Thirteenth Convention U. B.*, p. 193-194

⁶⁶ *Proceedings A. F. of L.*, p. 56. It was reported that the matter had been adjusted.

vention rejected a proposal to amalgamate with the Wood Workers, but instructed their central officers to negotiate an agreement with the Amalgamated Union, subject to ratification by their membership. Acting under these instructions, the officers of the two unions formed an agreement which provided for a mutual recognition of working cards. It was agreed that each organization should refrain from persuading members to withdraw from the other, and that each union should endeavor to persuade the workmen to join their respective unions and further that each union should have the right to a fraternal delegate at the convention of the other.⁶⁷ This agreement was ratified in 1902, but did not end the trouble.⁶⁸ The dispute was then taken to the Louisville Convention of the American Federation but was withdrawn in order that the officers might come together in joint conference. In 1903 the matter was again taken up by the American Federation on complaint of the Wood Carvers, and the convention recognized the jurisdiction of the Wood Carvers' Union over all wood carvers, except the machine wood carvers which came within the jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Wood Workers union.⁶⁹ As a result of these conflicts the Amalgamated Union lost its control over the machine carvers and a Spindle Wood Carvers' Association was formed. These two wood carvers' unions were soon engaged in a jurisdictional dispute with each other. At the convention of the American Federation in 1908 it was ordered that the officers of the two organizations should meet to adjust their differences.

A dispute similar in character developed between the Wood Workers and the Piano and Organ Workers' union, an organization that was formed in the piano and organ factories during the summer of 1898.⁷⁰ An application for a charter in the American Federation was made in 1899 but it was opposed by the Amalgamated Union and a conflict arose as a result. At the convention of the American Federation of Labor in 1901 an

⁶⁷ *Proceedings I. W. C. A.*, 1900, p. 21; also *I. W. C.*, Feb. 1901; *I. W. W.*, Oct. 1900, p. 116, Feb. 1901, p. 14.

⁶⁸ *I. W. W.*, Nov. 1901, p. 126; July, 1902, p. 75; Sept. 1902, p. 101.

⁶⁹ *Proceedings A. F. of L.*, 1903, p. 152, 248.

⁷⁰ *Proceedings, A. F. L.*, 1899, p. 54, 89, 141-2.

agreement was reached which recognized the jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Union over the machine wood workers and all cabinet makers in the shops who were already members of that organization. The right of the Piano and Organ Makers' Union to organize all other men in the piano and organ works was recognized. The agreement provided also a means for arbitrating all differences between the two unions.⁷¹ This agreement did not become effective because, it was asserted, the piano and organ workers failed to ratify it. Since that time there has been constant friction between the two organizations over the question of jurisdiction and as a result neither union has been able to maintain a strong hold on the workmen in these shops.

Besides the conflicts already described there has been a dispute with a Box Makers' Union whose jurisdiction was disputed by the wood workers. The American Federation of Labor refused to grant the box makers a charter on the grounds that they rightly came within the jurisdiction of the Amalgamated Union. In all of these cases the interests of the workmen could have been more effectively met by one strong organization. It seems clear that these conflicts have been fostered by the personal ambition of certain leaders, for in the cases already reviewed the character of the industry did not justify separate unions. In only one instance can it be said that there was a real overlapping of craft interests, and that was in the case of a dispute between the Amalgamated Union and the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paper-hangers of America in which the grievance was caused by a change in the processes of production. More and more of the wood work and interior finish is being manufactured in the factories. The varnishing and shellacing was formerly done by the painters, but with the changed processes the work has been taken into the factories and done by the wood workers. And the practice has grown up where the factory has contracts for interior finish for these men to go out to the buildings and put on the last coat after the material was put into place. The painters regarded this as an encroachment on their jurisdiction and they claimed further that

⁷¹ *L. W. W.*, Jan. 1902, p. 1; *Proceedings A. F. L.*, 1901, p. 161-2.

the wage scale of the wood workers was below that of their own organization which would endanger their own wage scale. This dispute came to the American Federation of Labor in 1903 when the officers of the two organizations were ordered to get together and attempt to adjust their differences. In 1904 the claims of the painters was supported by the convention contrary to the report of the committee on grievances.⁷² The executive committee of the American Federation, however, took the question up on complaint of the Wood Workers and brought it to the convention in 1905 on the ground that an agreement existed at the time of the last convention and the action taken at that time abrogating the agreement was contrary to the practice of the American Federation in such questions. This convention reversed the order of the previous convention and recognized the existence of an agreement and recommended that it remain in force until representatives of the two unions can come together and form a new one or abrogate the old one.⁷³ With the loss of strength on the part of the wood workers the conflict became less severe and tended to disappear. From the foregoing description it appears that jurisdictional troubles have arisen from two fairly distinct causes: first, the over-lapping of craft interests, and second an assumed over-lapping which is better accounted for by the personal ambitions of some labor leader. From whatever cause those troubles have arisen the effects have been the same. In all cases they have resulted in a loss of strength to the unions involved.

⁷² *Proceedings, A. F. L.*, 1904, p. 137-8, 221-2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1905, p. 72, 73, 213, 214.

CHAPTER IX

THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNION ON THE INDUSTRY

The most direct and obvious influence of the union on the industry is exerted through its effect on wages and hours of labor. Two things should be said concerning the study of this topic. In the first place the available data are meager and incomplete, but what exist are of service in furnishing concrete evidence for certain statements, made by the union leaders, and also in supporting certain conclusions which seem well-founded, though difficult of positive proof. Second, the available facts are for the most part out of date, and do not accurately reflect present conditions, but the conclusions drawn from them have been verified in so far as possible by statements made by manufacturers, superintendents and others, who have been in a position to know what the actual situation is. It should be stated, however, that recent statistics would probably be no more instructive than those for the earlier dates, on account of the influence of the jurisdictional fight, which would render the interpretation of recent statistics more complex and difficult.

In making their demands for improved conditions, the workmen in this group of industries have almost invariably coupled wages and hours, although they have not always insisted upon both an increase in wages and a reduction of hours in the same agreement.

Between 1865 and 1871 there were two influences affecting wages. In the first place, the effect of the war, which rendered labor supply scarce and, therefore, more expensive. This was enhanced by the cheap money of the period which caused a general inflation of prices. Then the competition between hand and machine production, which caused a reduction of weekly wages. After 1871 wages steadily rose throughout that decade.

In the case of wood carvers in New York City the workmen joined the agitation for shorter hours in the early seventies, and succeeded during the decade in reducing the hours from 59 to 54 hours per week.¹ The next year they succeeded in clipping off another hour from the weekly work time, and at the same time materially raising the wages.² In 1886 the hours were again reduced with no change in wages, which were increased during the next two years.³ The carvers were fitfully organized in New York during the seventies, and throughout the United States both wages and hours were improved. In 1881 a wood carvers' union of some permanence was formed, which exerted an influence on conditions during the early eighties. The increase in wages continued after 1890 down to 1892, when the average wage was 40 cents per hour for a 49 hour week. However, the industrial depression in 1893 had the effect both of reducing wages and lengthening the work time, for the average wage in 1893 was 33 cents per hour for a 51 hour week.⁴

Similar facts may be had for cabinet makers, furniture workers and sash, door, and blind makers in certain localities.⁵

The fall of wages during the seventies is the result of the industrial depression of 1873, and the long period of recuperation. During the early eighties wages began to pick up again. Organization among the furniture workers became more effective during this time,⁶ and increased strength of the union is reflected in improved conditions. The work-day was also materially shortened. Up to 1882 the prevailing hours were 10 per day and 60 per week. Between 1882 and 1885 this was reduced

¹ Cf. *New York Bureau of Statistics of Labor*, 1890. Pt. I, p. 217-219, 220. Tables which formed a part of the original manuscript of this thesis have been removed in order to comply with the space limitation, and general statements are given in their stead. In all cases these statements are based upon a consideration of these tables.

² There was nothing to indicate that the pay in 1880 was an average for the year. From tables for a later date, it appears that the scale per hour varies from month to month. From August 1888 to November 1890 the average wage per hour increased from 27c to 35c, but began immediately to decline. *Ibid.* p. 217-219.

³ *Ibid.* p. 217-219.

⁴ *Annual Report of the New York Bureau of Labor*, 1896, p. 178, for statistics.

⁵ *New York Bureau of Statistics of Labor*, 1890, Pt. I, p. 212.

⁶ Cf. page 52.

to 56 hours, which was again shortened to 53 hours between 1885 and 1889.⁷ The reduction of hours at this time was accompanied by an increase in wages.

Between 1883 and 1889 the wages of cabinet makers and furniture workers show an upward tendency in most of the cities where unions are located, as New York, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Syracuse and elsewhere.⁸ During the same interval the hours of labor in New York City were reduced from 10 to 9 and in some cases even to 8. In most other cities the normal work time was 60 hours per week with perhaps an hour off on Saturdays. For the first half of the next decade the data is somewhat more complete. Wages were in general higher than in the eighties, but the effects of the industrial depression in 1893 are apparent. Hours of labor were on the whole longer, except in New York City where organized labor was strongest, and even here the 53 hour week was lengthened during the crisis years, but was again in force in 1895.⁹ The conclusions presented are based upon conditions in New York, but the situation seems to be similar in other localities. Wages in Massachusetts were somewhat below those paid in New York City, but equal to and above those paid in many of the towns of the state.¹⁰

During the years covered by this study, particularly during the eighties and first half of the nineties, the cabinet makers were fairly well organized in the larger cities. An examination of the statistics will show that in the cities and towns where the union was strongest the wages had been pushed up and hours reduced. Other forces operated to raise wages, and account for differences between towns, but credit must be given to the union for a portion of this result. This is particularly true in regard to the reduction of the hours. The campaign for a shorter work day was carried on vigorously during the eighties and was successful in certain localities. An illustration of the positive

⁷ *New York Bureau of Statistics of Labor*, 1890, Pt. I, p. 212.

⁸ Conclusions based upon statistics compiled from *New York Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 1888, pp. 309-313; 1890, Pt. 1, p. 212.

⁹ Cf. *Fourteenth An. Rept. N. Y. Bu. of Lab.*, p. 158.

¹⁰ *Mass. Bu. Labor*, 1897, p. 45. It has been impossible to account for all fluctuations in wages which doubtless arise from the methods of collection in the different years.

strength of the union during a portion of this time may be shown by the following facts. For years the piece work system had prevailed in the furniture shops of the country, and much opposition to the system had grown up among the workmen, largely because of the constant readjustments necessary on account of the changed methods of production. In 1882 this system was abolished in all union shops in New York City.¹¹ The high level of wages just preceding to the crisis of 1893 can in part be attributed to the influence of the union. The Furniture Workers' Union reached its maximum strength during the years 1890 to 1893, and while it suffered serious loss of membership during the crisis, it is safe to conclude that the union was able to resist greater reductions in wages, and particularly to prevent continued lengthening of the work day. These conclusions hold also for the sash, door, and blind makers and for the machine workers as well.¹² There is no evidence to indicate that conditions in other localities were affected differently from those studied, and the constant effort put forth by the unions to raise wages and reduce hours may be taken as supporting this conclusion.

Further study of statistics of these industries will reveal another factor of importance, one with which the union has had to deal for many years, namely, the wide variations in the rates of wages and hours of labor that prevail in different centers of production. For instance, the average wages for cabinet makers in New York, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Long Island City, and Troy ranged from \$2.15 to \$2.87 per day,¹³ while in smaller towns the average varied from \$1.38 to \$2.00 per day,—a difference of more than 100%. If the comparison be made between the highest wages paid in different localities, the variation is even more striking, or the difference between \$1.60 and \$5 per day,—a variation of more than 300%. The variation is shown in the wages paid other wood workers. The wages of sash, door, and blind makers varied during the same year from \$1.36 to \$2.33, or from \$2.00 to \$3.50, if the highest wages be compared. The variation

¹¹ *N. Y. Bu. Statistics of Labor*, 1890, Pt. I, p. 212.

¹² *Annual Report of N. Y. Bu. of Labor*, 1896, p. 566, 713, 760: p. 760, 713.

¹³ These rates were taken for the year 1892.

among the machine wood workers was from \$1.36 to \$2.25 for average wages, or \$1.50 to \$4.50, if highest wages be compared. The variation was not confined to one of wages, but the work time differed from 53 hours in New York to 60 hours per week in nearby smaller towns.

This variation of labor costs caused severe competition between the producer in large centers with those of the smaller towns with considerable advantage in favor of the latter. The producer in the large center has advantage of being close to market, but has further disadvantage in higher rents and fixed charges. The result of this situation has been to force the union to organize the factory wood workers, wherever the industry was located. The problem for the union of factory wood workers is very different from that of the carpenters. Wide differences in wages and hours may exist among carpenters without seriously affecting the industry in other localities, because the product of one locality does not compete with that of another. But because of the competition between large centers and small towns producing wood products, it has been necessary for the union to carry on an active campaign of organization in the smaller towns, if its demands in the larger centers were to be successful. The union has almost invariably first gained its strength in the larger centers. But attempts to improve conditions here have been met by the argument that the "out-of-town competition makes it impossible to raise wages or to shorten the work-day," or as one employer put it, "We would be perfectly willing to work six hours a day, providing our competitors were doing business on the same basis." This has been a continuous problem with the union, and frequently the membership of one locality has protested against agreements of another on the ground that the lower wage-scale of the latter would interfere with the framing of agreements by the former.¹⁴ Prior to the Grand Rapids con-

¹⁴An illustration of this kind may be given in the protest of the Chicago Wood Workers' Council to an agreement submitted for approval by a Milwaukee union. The proposed agreement provided for a minimum of 22 cents per hour. The Chicago Council was demanding 28 cents per hour and thought the Milwaukee union should demand at least 25 cents. Because of this protest the Milwaukee agreement was not approved. Cf. *I. W. W.*, July, 1903, p. 15-16.

vention in 1900, this problem was left with the local unions, but at this convention it was provided that all agreements should be approved by the general council, and the label would not be granted, unless a minimum scale, satisfactory to the council, was provided in the agreement. In 1901 a Toledo firm was refused the label because the scale did not provide a minimum wage of \$2.00 per day and a 9 hour day. The influence of the union then has been not only to improve the conditions of labor, but it has endeavored to equalize the labor costs in different localities. The union has not always been able to accomplish this desirable end, on account of the difficulty it has often encountered in maintaining a strong organization in the smaller towns. Wherever the union has been strong enough to exert an influence, the difference in costs have played an important part in the negotiations leading to agreements.¹⁵

Another influence on the industry may be traced to the variations in labor costs, together with differences in rents and other fixed charges which exist between different localities. Whenever these differences become large, the natural tendency is to shift the industry from the large center to the smaller town. If labor costs are an important item in the total costs of production, the efforts of the union to raise wages and decrease hours operate to drive the industry to some less expensive location. The furniture business felt this influence in the early nineties, particularly in New York and Brooklyn. The manufacturers, located in these cities, complained of the competition of producers in towns like Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and other up-state towns.¹⁶ All the leading centers of production still feel this same influence. The following facts may be cited in proof of this statement. In the decade between 1890 and 1900 Chicago lost not only relatively, but absolutely, in the production of several wood working industries. The value of factory-made furniture declined from 13.5 millions in 1890 to 12.3 millions in 1900. The value of the product at Grand Rapids, Michigan, increased from 5.6 to 7.4 millions during the same period. In fact in practically all the

¹⁵ Cf. page 143.

¹⁶ Cf. Pamphlet on *Condition of Wood Working*.

surrounding towns there was an increase in the yearly production during the decade. There is little doubt that the census of 1910 will show even a more marked decline, if statements of the producers can be accepted at their face value. In the planing mill industry, in which Chicago is still the largest producing center, there has been both an absolute and a relative loss. The value of the product in 1890 was 17.6 millions, while in 1900 it was only 7.5 millions. The planing mills of the country have shifted in the direction of the source of raw material, and in some cases have been combined with the large saw mills.¹⁷ This same loss has been experienced in the manufacture of musical instruments. In consultation with the superintendents of some of the large factories in Chicago the writer has been told that within the last ten years a number of large concerns have moved to smaller towns in order to escape the influence of the unions. During the year 1908 one of the largest manufacturers of billiard tables, saloon, and office fixtures, erected a large factory at Muskegan, Michigan.¹⁸ It is significant that the wage scale in Muskegan is distinctly less than the scale, which has prevailed for a number of years in the Chicago plant.¹⁹ It would be incorrect to attribute this shifting of the industry solely to the influence of the union, but the constant activity of the union, together with its greater strength in the larger cities has without question tended to force capital to seek localities less hampered by these restrictions.

There are, however, two important forces which operate to counteract the advantages of the smaller towns. First, distance from the market. In some lines of the industry this force is of very considerable importance on account of the difference in freight rates on raw materials and on the finished products. In the second place, the influence of labor saving machinery. The extended use of the revolving planer, the "sander," and the compound carvers, to say nothing of numerous minor machines, has rendered the labor cost relatively less important. These two

¹⁷ These statements are based on an analysis of census figures.

¹⁸ Brunswick, Balke, Collender & Co. They have other factories in New York, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis.

¹⁹ Cf. page 220.

forces work together to resist the transfer of the factory from the large center to the smaller towns. It is also asserted that in some lines at least the more expensive and high grade goods continue to be produced in the large centers, notwithstanding increasing costs. The explanation given for this is the fact that the market demands at times special designs and fine workmanship, which can be obtained most easily in the large centers.

In conclusion it should be said that an attempt has been made in this thesis to trace the development of organization in the wood working trades, endeavoring to connect, so far as possible, the movement with the changes in the industry itself. It has been shown that considerable specialization had taken place prior to 1840, and that during the decade immediately preceding this date, several groups of workmen were organized. The movement at this time was cut short by the panic of 1837. When the agitation began again it was largely among a new class of workmen, namely, among the recent German immigrants. At first the movement among the German laborers was not strictly a trade union movement. Many of them had left their fatherland, because of their radical, socialistic views, which they continued to hold, and in some cases, to put into practice in the country of their choice. The number of German laborers in the wood working trades enabled them to stamp the movement with their radical views, so that even today the declaration of principles, affixed to the constitution of the Amalgamated Union, has a distinctive socialistic ring. The movement was again cut short by the Civil War, but soon revived after this conflict.

The first national union to be formed among laborers in this industry was the Furniture Workers' Union, which endeavored to organize the shops and factories producing cabinet work. This union was at first composed exclusively of Germans, but later reorganized in order to admit all workmen regardless of nationality. During the first ten years of its existence the Furniture Workers' Union exercised very little influence on the industry. The next national union of importance to be estab-

lished was the United Brotherhood of Carpenters.²⁰ At first there was not sufficient overlapping to cause a conflict between these two unions, but changes in the industry soon brought them into collision. Later a new union was formed among a group of workmen that had been developed in the industry as a result of the wide spread use of machinery, namely the Machine Wood Workers' Union. The lines of demarcation between these unions were in no case well defined, and clashes were inevitable. The machine wood workers and the carpenters finally succeeded in framing an agreement that furnished a working basis. They agreed, with minor exceptions, to accept the mill as the dividing line between them. The relations between the machine wood workers and the furniture workers were more intimate, and it was next to impossible to draw up a workable agreement between these two organizations, so that they proceeded to amalgamate. This action left two organizations in the field with a clearly defined line of jurisdiction separating them. Both were prosperous unions, each occupying a large field. However, the gradual extension of the factory over larger and larger portions of building material, thus encroaching upon the work of the carpenter, caused the United Brotherhood of Carpenters to abrogate all agreements, and to lay claim to the entire field. This action led to a serious warfare, which has depleted the membership of one organization and has reduced the number of organized workmen in the industry. This conflict has been a useless and wasteful struggle that will ever remain, whatever may be the final settlement of the dispute, as a blot on the history of organized labor in the wood working trades.

Particular attention has also been given to the internal structure of the union, studied with special reference to methods and policies employed. The methods of framing trade agreements and of enforcing the same; the use and control of the aggressive weapons—the strike and boycott; the financial and benefit systems—these have all been studied with a view of setting forth in complete form the operations of a trade union. In connection with this study it has been pointed out that the trade union

²⁰ This name was not used until later.

furnishes an excellent laboratory for observing experiments in government. It is of interest to note that, wherever the conditions are identical, the union tends to develop machinery very similar to that in operation in the state. On the whole, trade union government is more revolutionary and democratic than that of a state, but nevertheless the experiments of the former throw light upon the problems of the latter.

Finally the effect of the union on the industry has been studied the results indicating that, barring the destructive influences of the jurisdictional fights, the influence of the union has been to raise wages and to lower hours of labor. In this connection it was pointed out that the problem of the Amalgamated Union was different from that of a carpenters' union, on account of the competition between producers in different localities. Attempts to raise the standards in large centers were met by the argument that the scale of the competitors prevented any advance. Under these circumstances it became necessary for the union to equalize, so far as possible, the wage-scales in different localities. To do this the general officers found that central authority had to be exercised over the terms of all agreements. This authority was granted to the general council at the Grand Rapids convention in 1900. In so far as the union has been successful in accomplishing this end, it has served to equalize the conditions of competition. However, in recent years the strength of the union has been wasted in jurisdictional fights, and at present, except in a small way in one or two localities, the Amalgamated Union exercises little or no influence on the conditions of employment.

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